WILLIE PERSON MANGUM:
POLITICS AND PRAGMATISM IN THE AGE OF JACKSON

By

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Abstract of Dissertation Presented to the Graduate School
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WILLIE PERSON MANGUM: POLITICS AND PRAGMATISM IN THE AGE OF JACKSON

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For most of his eighteen years in the United States Senate, Willie Mangum wielded tremendous power and influenced the course of national politics. He served as president pro tempore of the senate, oversaw political campaigns in every state, and advised those who became paragons of their age. His current lack of historical notoriety, while undeserved, can be explained by his political style. His important work took place in committee meetings, cloakrooms, taverns, or boarding houses; all places far removed from public view. However, it was here that Mangum and a generation of leaders orchestrated the development and consolidation of modern political parties and fashioned the legislation and the compromises that define the Age of Jackson. This dissertation examines the transformation of elite antebellum American political culture through the lens of biography.

Willie Mangum's informal style of management together with his long tenure in Congress elevated him to the highest ranks of the national Whig organization. His career demonstrates the varied ways in which the Whig elite brokered power and exchanged favors to maintain political viability. Similarly, his evolution from an antipartisan politician to a leader of a national organization illustrate the conflict in American politics between rhetoric and reality. The republican traditions so warmly embraced by the electorate and so eloquently defended by the officeseekers, were often ignored in the closed-door sessions that produced public policy. Despite a genuine belief in the principles espoused by the Revolutionary generation, Mangum and his contemporaries placed practical concerns above potentially divisive ideals and employed both formal and informal mechanisms to achieve what they regarded as workable solutions to complex problems. His flexible definition of republicanism and pragmatic approach to power politics served him well in an age when a market revolution was transforming American society.

INTRODUCTION
THE AGE OF PRAGMATISM

Henry Clay's funeral procession moved solemnly down Pennsylvania Avenue and into the senate chamber where the body of the great compromiser would lay in state. Six United States senators filed alongside the caisson as honorary pallbearers, their faces and reputations almost as well known to the American people as the man they had come to mourn. Among those marching was Lewis Cass, the Democratic presidential nominee in 1848, and John Bell, former Speaker of the House. Willie Person Mangum, the senior senator from North Carolina and one of Clay's closest friends and most trusted allies, walked with them.[1] Both Clay and Mangum enjoyed long careers in Washington and both epitomized a generation of political leaders in America. In what could accurately be described as the "Age of Pragmatism" -- the period between 1820 and 1848 -- the two stood out as paragons of an age. Avoiding divisive issues, creating broad coalitions, fashioning compromises, and building a national party system, these two pragmatists guided American politics from the localism of the eighteenth century into the modern era.

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[1] His name is pronounced "Wylie Parson Mangum." See, Henry Thomas Shanks, ed., The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 5 vols. (Raleigh: State Department of Archives and History, 1950-1956), 5:762; Willie Person Mangum to Washington Hunt, 8 February 1844, Willie P. Mangum Family Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.; Robert V. Remini, Henry Clay: Statesman for the Union (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1991), pp. 782.

In carrying Clay to his grave, however, Mangum and the others were carrying political pragmatism to its final rest. In effect, they were burying an age. Frail and bitter, the sixty-year-old Mangum would remain in Washington for only one more year, ending more than three decades of public service. While in better physical condition than Clay, Mangum's political career was just as moribund. By 1852, the generation of pragmatists had given way to a new breed of younger politicians. Mangum no longer fit in with this crowd and so he left, a discarded remnant of the second party system.

Born in 1792 in Orange County, North Carolina, Willie Person Mangum rose from the state legislature to the United States House of Representatives. In 1830, he entered the United States Senate and served one term before resigning in 1836. Four years later he was reelected to the senate, where he remained for more than twelve years. During that time Mangum labored in the company of giants. He participated as a member of the most prestigious committees, advised presidents, hosted foreign dignitaries, and served as the president pro tempore of the senate. High ranking party officials looked on Mangum as a man of national renown and often mentioned him as a possible contender for the highest state and national offices. Rigidly partisan and chauvinistically southern in his public utterances, he nevertheless enjoyed private relationships with men from both political parties and every region. Two years before escorting the body of Henry Clay to the Capitol, Mangum was a pallbearer in the funeral procession of John C. Calhoun, evidence indeed of the breadth of his personal associations. Over the course of his long career, Mangum earned the admiration and respect of those who knew him on a passing level.

Those who knew him well knew him to be an outgoing, honorable, and generous man. He applied these virtues to a career noted for its longevity and success.[2]

Given his contemporary fame and importance, why, the historian asks, has Willie Mangum all but vanished from national memory? He has been relegated to the appendices of textbooks where historians faithfully record the eleven electoral votes he received in the election of 1836. Little else of what he did is commonly known. Although his current obscurity is undeserved, it is understandable in light of the fact that his important work took place in private: in committee meetings, cloakrooms, taverns, or boarding houses. While the lives of presidents and presidential aspirants of the Jacksonian and antebellum periods have been noted, the deeds of those whose careers are similarly noteworthy, if less dramatic, need also be documented. Political biographers are drawn to the extraordinary and tend to ignore the routine; they look upon the beauty and grace of the thoroughbred, only to miss the power and drive of the work horse.

This dissertation represents a partial atonement for prior historical neglect. It covers the life of Willie Mangum from his boyhood up to the year 1849. Four historians have started to write definitive, full-length biographies of Willie Mangum, but all failed to complete the task. Stephen B. Weeks, Penelope McDuffie, William K. Boyd, and Fletcher M. Green, each working independently, began biographies at one time or another. Coincidentally, each died before they could finish. The fifty-four page McDuffie

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[2] Allan Nevins, Ordeal of the Union, Vol. 1: Fruits of Manifest Destiny (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1947), p. 314.

biography was published in 1925 and a draft of Boyd's work survives in the Mangum Papers at the Duke University archives. Two graduate students, Edith Josephine Houston, writing in 1960, and Julian McIver Pleasants, writing in 1962, completed master's theses dealing with parts of Mangum's career, but neither constitute a true biography and both are dated.[3] Mangum himself once intimated that the history of his life would never be written because so much of what he did went unrecorded.[4] The "want of a scribe," historian Glenn Tucker wrote in 1966, explains why Mangum has not been accorded his due by subsequent generations of Americans.[5]

Ironically, Mangum's success as a party manager helps to explain the absence of a full-length biography. During the 1830s he helped mold the North Carolina Whig Party into an efficient organization. In 1840, 1844, and 1848 North Carolina gave all its electoral votes to the Whig presidential candidate and for most of the decade they held narrow majorities in state legislature and controlled the governorship outright. So, when national party leaders met to name candidates to run for national office they passed over

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[3] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 1:vii; Penelope McDuffie, "Chapters in the Life of Willie Person Mangum," The Historical Papers, Published by the Trinity College Historical Society (Durham: Duke University Press, 1925); William K. Boyd, "A Draft of the Life of Willie P. Mangum." Willie Person Mangum Papers, Special Collections, Duke University Library, Durham, North Carolina; Edith Josephine Houston, "The Bank of the United States and Willie P. Mangum." (M.A. thesis, Appalachian State Teachers College, 1960); Julian McIver Pleasants, "The Political Career of Willie Person Mangum, 1828-1840" (M.A. thesis, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1962).

[4] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 5:741.

[5] Glenn Tucker, "For Want of a Scribe," North Carolina Historical Review 43 (1966):184.

Mangum, in part because they regarded his state as safely Whig. Customarily, the more hotly contested states or those with larger populations won the right to place the names of their native sons before the national electorate. Of those born in the Old North State, only James K. Polk, Andrew Jackson, and Andrew Johnson, three men who relocated elsewhere prior to embarking on political careers, won spots on successful national tickets. Had Mangum been picked to run on such a ticket, he would have caught the attention of a biographer before now.[6]

The literature on antebellum southern politics in general and North Carolina in particular is rich and places Mangum in a larger perspective. In The South and the Politics of Slavery, 1828-1856, author William J. Cooper demonstrates how politicians like Mangum suited their rhetoric to the whim of the electorate. Using Willie Mangum as a yardstick, however, Cooper's thesis, that slave-related issues were almost always the central focus of southern politics, is overstated. To be sure, Mangum proved a stout defender of slavery and ultimately sided with fellow southerners on many questions pertaining to slavery. Like most southern Whigs, however, he did his utmost to see to it that the question rarely entered into the discourse and looked to party, not region, as the unifying force in American politics at the height of the second party system. Historian John Ashworth, in 'Agrarians & Aristocrats': Party Ideology in the United States, 1837-1846, better captures the inherent complexities of southern Whiggery as typified by Mangum's evolving outlook on key national issues, but relies too heavily on ideology as

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[6] Thomas E. Jeffrey, State Parties and National Politics: North Carolina, 1814-1861 (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1989), p. 162.

an explanation for most Whig policies. So too does J. Mills Thornton in his study of antebellum Alabama.[7]

Of the studies relating specifically to antebellum North Carolina politics, Jacksonian Politics and Community Conflict: The Emergence of the Second American Party System in Cumberland County, North Carolina, by Harry L. Watson, is best at placing North Carolina within the broader context of national politics. It also comes closest to naming pragmatism as a driving force in elite political behavior. Two recent works on the second party system in North Carolina take opposing views of the importance of pragmatism in the process of party formation. In Parties and Politics in North Carolina, 1836-1865, published in 1983, Marc Kruman brings the republican synthesis to the Tar Heel state. Locating the source of party conflict in the ideology of the Revolutionary generation, Kruman argues that the Whigs and Democrats battled continually over which policies best preserved republicanism. Thomas Jeffrey, in State Parties and National Politics: North Carolina, 1815-1861, views the partisan battles in antebellum North Carolina as having more pragmatic antecedents. As he saw it, state and local issues had become so divisive by the mid-1830s that leaders from both parties started to emphasize national issues to unite easterners and westerners in true statewide parties. Where Kruman is ready to accept the rhetoric of antebellum political leaders at face value, Jeffrey offers

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[7] William J. Cooper, Jr., The South and the Politics of Slavery, 1828-1856 (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1978); John Ashworth, "Agrarians" and "Aristocrats": Party Political Ideology in the United States, 1837-1846 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983); J. Mills Thornton, III, Politics and Power in a Slave Society: Alabama, 1800-1860 (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1978).

a more skeptical, and in my opinion, more realistic view of partisan politics in an age of an expanding electorate.[8]

The use of the phrase "Age of Jackson" in the subtitle of this work is deliberate. Although considered by some historians to be outdated, the phrase recalls how important Andrew Jackson, as both an individual and an issue, was to the course of American politics for more than twenty years. More importantly, it calls to mind the politics of evasion that men like Mangum practiced throughout this period. In order to build national coalitions in a nation of such great regional, social, and economic diversity, party leaders had to mute the more divisive issues, particularly slavery, and focus less volatile questions or mere symbols. The two major political parties to emerge during the second party system were nonideological, as were most of their leaders. To appease their broad constituencies, nineteenth-century political leaders, whom historian Edward Pessen has referred to as opportunists par excellence, eschewed ideology. Instead, they focused public attention on the quadrennial contest for the presidency. The "presidential game," as Richard P. McCormick noted, drew regional factions together in ways previously unimagined and forestalled a constitutional crisis over the question that divided North from South -- slavery. On those occasions when ideologues did get the public's ear -- the

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[8] Harry L. Watson, Jacksonian Politics and Community Conflict: The Emergence of the Second Party System in Cumberland County North Carolina (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1981); Marc W. Kruman, Parties and Politics in North Carolina, 1836-1865 (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1983); Jeffrey, State Parties and National Politics.

nullification crisis, for example -- politics-as-usual came to a standstill and the pragmatists had to reassert themselves by restoring banality to center stage.[9]

What little issue-oriented politics took place in America during this period took place outside the mainstream. Reformers and idealists had to construct fringe parties or leave politics aside to form private benevolent societies. According to the nineteenth-century liberal paradigm, government was defined in the negative. The American people, still devoted to the idealism of the American Revolution, wanted to limit the power of the state. Any work beyond collecting taxes, delivering the mail, organizing the military, and establishing diplomatic missions belonged to the private sector. The services provided by the state needed civil servants, so those who entered politics were rewarded with control of vast reserves of patronage. Therefore, government service attracted pragmatists like Mangum, a man more concerned with power and position than with social uplift.

Laissez-faire government and the politics it spawned insured the rise of a generation of pragmatists. The parties they built in the late 1820s were born out of personal cliques

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[9] Edward Pessen, Jacksonian America: Society, Personality, and Politics (Rev. ed. Homewood Ill.: The Dorsey Press, 1978), pp. 232, 258, 287, 324, 326; Richard P. McCormick, The Presidential Game: The Origins of American Presidential Politics (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982); Harry L. Watson, Liberty and Power: The Politics of Jacksonian America (New York: Hill and Wang, 1990), p. 10; Richard L. McCormick, The Party Period and Public Policy: American Politics from the Age of Jackson to the Progressive Era (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), pp. 160-61; David M. Potter, The Impending Crisis, 1848-1861 (New York: Harper & Row, 1976), p. 226; Frank J. Sorauf, Political Parties in the American System (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1964), pp. 61-65, 127; Glyndon G. Van Deusen, "Some Aspects of Whig Thought and Theory in the Jacksonian Period," American Historical Review 63 (1958):322; Eric Foner, "Politics, Ideology, and the Origins of the American Civil War," in A Nation Divided: Problems and Issues of the Civil War and Reconstruction, ed. George Fredrickson (Minneapolis: Burgess Publishing Company, 1975), pp. 15-16.

that had grown dependent on the good will of an ever expanding electorate. With an innate distrust for activist governments, Mangum and others like him concentrated on distributing the benefits of the state to these voters in the guise of keeping the state in check. Tariff policy, incorporation laws, bank charters, internal improvements, and the redistribution of proceeds from the sale of the public domain, all represented efforts by a new professional class of politicians to broaden their own power bases while limiting the reach of the state. As historian Richard L. McCormick has shown, "policies of allocation and distribution proved remarkably conducive to the formation and persistence of parties." They were also safe, an essential element in the process of party formation in a large republic. Pragmatists like Mangum, Henry Clay, and Martin Van Buren built and maintained the second party system with the belief that immutable principles had to remain in the background and used distributive policies to guarantee its continuance.[10]

While Mangum held strong opinions, he rarely let them interrupt the normal course of business. In this regard he embodies a centrist tradition as old as the nation itself. For all of its history the United States produced politicians with the same moderate proclivities. Compromising individual principles for what was believed to be the greater good of the nation, men like Mangum defined the nature of national politics for generations to come. An informal style of management, coupled with his long tenure in the United States Congress, elevated Mangum to the highest ranks of the national Whig organization. From there he had a unique perspective on a dynamic era. His career illustrates the varied ways

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[10] McCormick, The Party Period and Public Policy, pp. 139. See also, ibid., pp. 206-210.

in which the Whig elite brokered power and exchanged favors in order to stay in office and maintain viability. Despite a genuine belief in the principles espoused by the Revolutionary generation, Mangum and the other political leaders of the era often placed practical concerns above principles and employed both formal and informal mechanisms to achieve justifiable ends. Confronting the contradictions between the republican tradition of an earlier generation and the demands of a society in the throes of a market revolution, pragmatic politicians organized the electorate and guided American political organizations from factions to parties.

Biographies humanize the past. For this reason several historians have raised a cry for more political biographies. David Brion Davis wrote that biographies allow us to "examine in detail how the personality crisis of a complex individual reflect tensions within the general culture and how the individual's resolutions of conflict within himself lead ultimately to transformations within the culture." As this biography will demonstrate, Willie Mangum personified the dramatic shift in values of southern Whiggery between the years 1830 and 1850 and so lends Davis' statement credibility.[11] Ronald Formisano also called for "studies of elite motivation." "The much heralded replacement of traditional notables by a 'new class' of professional politicians," Formisano wrote in 1974, "should be systematically studied" if we are to understand the broader political changes that

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[11] David Brion Davis, "Some Recent Directions in Cultural History," American Historical Review 73 (1968):704.

occurred during the early national period.[12] More recently Peter Knupfer and Michael Holt have made similar appeals.[13]

The scholarship of the past thirty years has redefined political history as the study of political culture, constituent behavior, and the ideological basis of mass political parties. Still, for all their achievements, students of the new political history and the republican synthesis have replaced flesh and blood characters with abstractions and statistical aggregates. Biography restores the participants to historical discourse and human agency to the process of party formation. Indeed, this work represents a necessary corrective to what I believe to be the overstatements of the republican synthesis. So much of that literature mistakes political rhetoric for reality. This is not to suggest that Mangum's generation rejected ideology. Instead, they understood that principles were often luxuries they could ill afford as they tried, for example, to reconcile the antipartisan rhetoric of republicanism with the need to organize an expanding electorate. Reviewing two books on working-class culture in the early republic, both of which rely heavily on the republican synthesis, critic Richard Stott remarked that he was "continually struck by how implausibly high-minded artisans usually appear." The same can be said for the politicians of this period. Like Stott, I believe that "by humanizing [politicians], we will make them more

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[12] Ronald P. Formisano, "Deferential-Participation Politics: The Early Republic's Political Culture, 1789-1840," American Political Science Review 68 (1974):478.

[13] Peter B. Knupfer, The Union as It Is: Constitutional Unionism and Sectional Compromise, 1787-1861 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991), p. x; Michael F. Holt, Political Parties and American Development: from the Age of Jackson to the Age of Lincoln (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1992), p. 22.

real, and in some ways more sympathetic, than the relentlessly respectable [politicians] of so much of the recent literature."[14] This study reintroduces party managers to the study of American politics without retreating to the old elitist perspective. It combines elements of the new political history and the republican synthesis while seeking to avoid the overstatements.

The career of Willie Mangum coincides with the early stages of what historians have labeled the market and transportation revolutions. Many of my ideas about Willie Mangum and his times have been shaped by the recent literature concerning the changing political economy of the early national period. A commercial boom after 1815 brought national and international market forces into local economies, carrying in their wake important changes in the nature of American politics. Charles Sellers wrote that "a new generation of realists" eased the transition to a market-driven economy by using the state to promote economic development. Facing social and economic dislocation, many Americans fell back on an outdated ideology to express their displeasure with the new order. Astute rhetoricians like Mangum fashioned their words in such a way as to appear sympathetic to their pain, champions of their lost cause. In reality, they were nothing of the sort. Mangum thought that the long-term benefits of economic expansion would be great for the country. In the meantime, he, along with the rest of the nation, stumbled through a new age trying to fit old concepts to new problems with little success. Indeed,

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[14] Richard Stott, "Respectable Artisans," Reviews in American History 22 (1994):228; See also, John P. Diggins, The Lost Soul of American Politics, Virtue, Self-Interest, and the Foundations of Liberalism (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1984), pp. 12-14, 105-109, 112-113.

the tension between the promise of the republic and the demands of commercial capitalism explain the disparity so often seen between Mangum's words and his deeds. Innovations and inventions in transportation and communication technology only amplified them, as railroad lines and telegraph wires drew more people into the vortex of national politics.[15]

The intellectual and ideological route travelled by Mangum closely parallels the course followed by a generation of Southern Whigs. Like so many other southern Whigs, Mangum emerged from the Federalist era with loose moorings and no particular political affiliation. In 1824, Mangum, an advocate of states rights, aligned with the supporters of William Crawford during the presidential campaign that year. After the Georgian had suffered a nearly fatal stroke, Mangum reluctantly joined with Andrew Jackson and the Democrats, once again following the path blazed by a generation of southerners. Jackson's belligerent response to nullification and his war on the Second Bank of the United States alarmed conservative southerners like Mangum, who regarded this expansion of federal power as an encroachment on the rights of the individual states and a threat to the republic. Eventually Mangum united the opposition in his home state under the Whig banner and by 1840 had placed them in Henry Clay's hands. For the next decade he and

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[15] Quote from, Charles G. Sellers, The Market Revolution: Jacksonian America, 1815-1846 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), p. 348. See also, Ronald P. Formisano, The Transformation of Political Culture: Massachusetts Parties, 1790s-1840s (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), p. 16; Daniel Feller, "Politics and Society: Toward a New Jacksonian Synthesis." Journal of the Early Republic 10 (1990):155. The idea that pragmatists often carry out the work of idealists is taken from, David Remnick, "The Hangover," The New Yorker (22 November 1993):51-65. Remnick's observation that post-Soviet Russia has suffered because ideologues, not pragmatists, lead the government fits nicely with my ideas and shows them to be timeless.

the other southern Whigs worked side by side with their northern allies. When the alliance began to deteriorate over the slavery issue, Mangum tried to force upon his fellow southerners a settlement many could not stomach. The pragmatist did not fully understand the passions that divided his party. Fittingly, Mangum's gradual physical decline mirrored that of his dying party. He suffered a series of strokes in the 1850s but lingered until the outbreak of the Civil War. The North Carolina Whigs also held on until the war, but, like Mangum, their best days were behind them. He shrunk physically and emotionally to become a crippled reminder of a bygone era. In September 1861, Willie Person Mangum, the quintessential southern Whig, suffered his final stroke and died shortly thereafter.[16]

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[16] Cooper, The South and the Politics of Slavery, pp. 163-64.

CHAPTER 1
RED MOUNTAIN

On May 10, 1792, Catherine Davis Mangum gave birth to her first child at her home near Red Mountain, North Carolina. Catherine and her husband, William Person Mangum, named their son Willie (pronounced "Wylie" in the eighteenth-century English fashion). The new parents had decided to forgo customary naming practices which dictated that the infant should take the name of a blood relative. Instead, they chose to honor one of North Carolina's leading citizens, Willie Jones. Born in 1741, Jones represented North Carolina in the Continental Congress during the American Revolution. Following the war, he served in the state senate, where he played a leading role in drafting North Carolina's first constitution. Appointed as a delegate to the Constitutional Convention of 1787, the ardent anti-Federalist refused the commission and shortly thereafter retired to his spacious plantation in Halifax. By naming their son for one of North Carolina's most esteemed patriots, Catherine and William Mangum may have been expressing their own republican sentiments. On the other hand, they may have simply been paying tribute to a local aristocrat. In any event, the new parents observed traditional naming patterns with the

newborn's middle name, Person (pronounced "parson"), the family name of the child's paternal grandmother.[1]

Willie Mangum grew to adulthood in the shadow of what was generously called Red Mountain, a gradually rising slope situated along the northern border of Orange County.[2] Located in the central piedmont region of North Carolina, Orange was home to scores of yeoman farmers and a handful of small-scale planters. In 1790 slaves accounted for 17 percent of the population of Orange County, the vast majority residing with masters who owned fewer than six chattel. The arable Durham, Wilkes, and Appling loam that blanketed the rolling hills of northern Orange County proved especially suited to the cultivation of tobacco, which the first settlers and their descendants produced in abundance. Some households added to their income by raising small amounts of cotton. Alongside nominal yields of these cash crops, local residents harvested enough wheat and corn and reared sufficient quantities of livestock to lead lives of rugged self-sufficiency.

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[1] Henry Thomas Shanks, ed., The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 5 vols. (Raleigh: State Department of Archives and History, 1950-1956), 1:xv; 5:762; According to Bertram Wyatt-Brown, parents in the old South were more likely to name their sons for a family member than for a prominent individual. Bertram Wyatt-Brown, Southern Honor: Ethics & Behavior in the Old South (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), pp. 120-21; William S. Powell, ed., Dictionary of American Biography, 4 vols. to date (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1979-1991), 3:330-31; Willie Person Mangum to Washington Hunt, 8 February 1844, Willie P. Mangum Family Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

[2] This area is now part of Durham County. The site of what had been the Mangum homestead is approximately seven miles north of the town of Bahama, along the Hampton Road between the Mount Tabor Methodist Church and the town of Rougement. Remnants of a brick foundation, a dilapidated tobacco shed, and a small graveyard, all resting on heavily-wooded, state-owned property, are all that remain of the old plantation.

Some of the more resourceful and less temperate inhabitants of Orange distilled goodly portions of their grain into whiskey and corn mash to smooth over the rougher edges of their wearisome frontier lives.[3]

In the 1740s and 1750s the first permanent European settlers arrived in Orange County by way of Pennsylvania and Virginia. Primarily of Scotch-Irish and German descent, they came to North Carolina looking for inexpensive land. Historian David Hackett Fischer describes these backcountry settlers as violent and "intensely resistant to change."[4] Striking a similar chord, Russel Nye notes that North Carolina was "a Jeffersonian stronghold of small farmers," adding that the state "seemed hardly Southern at all in comparison with its. . .neighbors [Virginia and South Carolina]."[5] The Regulator Movement, an early expression of backcountry dissatisfaction with North Carolina's provincial government, epitomized this tradition of self-reliance and violence. On May 16, 1771, the movement, which had spawned several bloodless riots since its inception in 1766, took a fatal turn when 1,185 militiamen equipped with artillery routed a band of two

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[3] Robert C. Kenzer, Kinship and Neighborhood in a Southern Community: Orange County, North Carolina, 1849-1881 (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1987), pp. 7, 23, 34-36, 38, 42; William Henry Hoyt, ed., The Papers of Archibald D. Murphey, 2 vols. (Raleigh: North Carolina Historical Commission, 1914), 1:38

[4] David Hackett Fischer, Albion's Seed: Four British Folkways in America (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989) p. 650; Thomas Jeffrey, State Parties and National Politics: North Carolina, 1814-1861 (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1989), p. 12; Kenzer, Kinship and Neighborhood, p. 7.

[5] Russel Blaine Nye, The Cultural Life of the New Nation, 1776-1830 (New York: Harper & Row, 1960), p. 114.

to three thousand ill-trained Regulators along Alamance Creek in Orange County.[6] In spite of their apparent proclivity for lawlessness and civil disobedience, the people of Orange County created stable communities characterized by strong kinship networks and very little geographic mobility. Families tended to cluster in one of Orange's eight "neighborhoods," where, as historian Robert Kenzer demonstrates, "family and kinship ties," not wealth, became the primary factors in determining one's status within the community.[7] The people of Orange also founded towns. Hillsborough, the largest settlement in Orange County, became a center of social, political, commercial, and cultural activity for this largely rural county.[8]

Planters in early nineteenth century North Carolina fed their offspring a steady diet of corn pone, smoked bacon, and republicanism. While maize and pork had long been staples in the Tar Heel larder, republicanism was a relative newcomer that succeeded in redefining gender roles within the family. Functioning primarily as "the dominant unit of

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[6] The Regulator Movement began in August of 1766 and was centered in Orange, Rowan, and Anson Counties. Its initial objective was to combat corruption in the provincial government and place local authorities "under better and honester regulation." A. Roger Ekirch, Poor Carolina: Politics and Society in Colonial North Carolina, 1729-1776 (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1981), pp. 164-65; Jeffrey, State Parties and National Politics, p. 13; Ruth Blackwelder, The Age of Orange: Political and Intellectual Leadership in North Carolina, 1752-1861 (Charlotte: William Loftin, Publisher, 1961), pp. vii, 48. Fischer, Albion's Seed, pp. 651.

[7] Kenzer, Kinship and Neighborhood, pp. 2, 6, 19.

[8] William K. Boyd, "A Draft of the Life of Willie P. Mangum," 1:3, Willie Person Mangum Papers, Special Collections, Duke University Library, Durham, North Carolina; Penelope McDuffie, "Chapters in the Life of Willie Person Mangum," The Historical Papers, Published by the Trinity College Historical Society (Durham: Duke University Press, 1925), p. 9.

production and reproduction," the plantation household also became a venue for the indoctrination of future citizens.[9] Republican mothers, exemplars of morality and self-sacrifice, worked to inculcate these same virtues in their sons and daughters. More demonstrative than earlier generations, turn-of-the-century planters spoke of their children in unmistakably sentimental terms, emphasizing the intrinsic worth of their progeny over their potential value as laborers. Fathers displayed new signs of respect for their sons, granting them great latitude when it came time for the young man to choose a career. Evidently, the romanticism expressed in the art and literature of this period had found its way into the domestic life of genteel North Carolinians.[10]

The first Mangums to settle in Orange County were Arthur and Lucy Person Mangum, Willie Mangum's grandparents. Born in the Spring of 1741 in Surry County, Virginia, Arthur Mangum was of Welsh ancestry. His parents came to North Carolina in the late 1740s as part of a great wave of migrants pushing south from Virginia in search

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[9] Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, Within the Plantation Household: Black and White Women of the Old South (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1988), p. 48; Gordon S. Wood, The Creation of the American Republic, 1776-1787 (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1969), p. 48; For more on the southern diet see Jack Larkin, The Reshaping of Everyday Life, 1790-1840 (New York: Harper & Row, 1988), pp. 171-74.

[10] Linda Kerber, Women in the Republic: Intellect and Ideology in Revolutionary America (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1980), pp. 11, 52, 283; Fox-Genovese, Within the Plantation Household, 109, 287-88; Larkin, The Reshaping of Everyday Life, pp. 52-52; Jane Turner Censer, North Carolina Planters and Their Children, 1800-1860 (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1984), pp. xv-xvi, 16-18, 39, 62; Philip Greven, The Protestant Temperament: Patterns of Child-Rearing, Religious Experience, and the Self in Early America (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1977), pp. 265-95.

of inexpensive and fertile land. That same exodus carried the family of Arthur's future bride Lucy. In the early 1760s, Arthur Mangum purchased several tracts of land in the Flat River neighborhood of Orange County. Arthur Mangum believed that in addition to providing a richer soil, the higher elevation along the base of Red Mountain would protect him and his family from the "fever and chills" that plagued folks in the lower lying areas of the county. Raising tobacco, hogs, cattle, wheat, and corn and marketing their surplus yield, Arthur and Lucy Mangum soon prospered. At the time of his death in March of 1789, Arthur Mangum's estate included an estimated 950 acres of land and seven slaves. A substantial portion of this acreage would one day come into the possession of Willie Mangum.[11]

Lucy and Arthur Mangum raised seven children on their Orange County plantation. Their first child, William Person Mangum, born in 1762, was Willie Mangum's father.[12] Upon the death of his own father in 1789, William inherited 200 acres of land. Over the course of his life he would augment this bequest by more than 2,300 acres and purchase at least 21 slaves. An estate of this size placed William Mangum within the ranks of North

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[11] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 1:84-85; 4:242; 5:746-47, 759; Kenzer, Kinship and Neighborhood, pp. 8-9; Stephen B. Weeks, "Willie Person Mangum," in Biographical History of North Carolina: From Colonial Times to the Present, Samuel A. Ashe, ed., 8 vols. (Greensboro: Charles L. Van Noppen, 1905-1917), 5:238; Shirley Jones Mallard, "Marcus Harris Mangum: His Ancestors and His Descendants," North Carolina Collection, Durham County Public Library, Durham, North Carolina, pp. 6-15.

[12] The exact date of William's birth remains uncertain. Most of the biographical and genealogical studies relating to the Mangum family give the year as 1762, but always with the qualifier "circa" placed before the date. McDuffie, "Chapters in the Life of Willie P. Mangum," p. 12; Weeks, "Willie Person Mangum," p. 239; Mallard, "Marcus Harris Mangum," p. 10.

Carolina planter society. His system of values, most notably his desire to provide his children with formal education, reinforced his identification with the ruling element of the state.[13]

Part of the responsibility for managing the family farm and raising the children fell to William's wife, Catherine Davis Mangum. Born in the Schuylkill River region of Pennsylvania, Catherine came with her family to Orange County when she was a child. The exact date of her marriage to William Mangum is unknown. On April 3, 1795 she gave birth to her second son, Priestly Hinton Mangum, and on January 28, 1798 delivered a third, Walter Alvis Mangum. All three of her children survived to adulthood. Beyond these facts little else is known of Willie Mangum's mother. In all probability, Catherine was a conventional wife and mother who tried to instill in her three boys religious devotion and republican principles.[14] She may have also suffered periodic bouts of depression, a condition her eldest son feared hereditary. When she died on March 11, 1829, Priestly Mangum informed his brother Willie that their father was grief stricken and that "the best and dearest of our family is taken from us."[15]

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[13] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 1:xv; 5:747; Mallard, "Marcus Harris Mangum," p.13; Federal Records, United States Bureau of the Census, 1800 and 1810; Censer, North Carolina Planters and Their Children, pp. 42-42.

[14] Censer, North Carolina Planters and Their Children, pp. xv, 16-18; Larkin, The Reshaping of Everyday Life, pp. 52-53; Ariana Holliday Mangum, "A Short History of the Mangum Family," North Carolina Collection, Chapel Hill, North Carolina, pp. 4-5.

[15] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 1:358-59, 368.

The obvious affection Priestly felt for his mother was equaled, if not surpassed, by the strong attachment he and his brother Willie had for one another. Their close companionship, which began in childhood, remained steadfast throughout both their lives. As schoolmates at the University of North Carolina, Willie and Priestly belonged to the same debating society and graduated together. As the two matured so did their relationship. Priestly, who built a successful law practice in Hillsborough, became Willie Mangum's most trusted confidant. The younger Mangum gave his brother political advice and looked after his personal and financial affairs while the elder Mangum was away from Red Mountain. The respective skills and temperaments of Willie and Priestly worked to their mutual advantage. Priestly, the more scholarly of the two, expressed his political views freely and without fear of offending his listeners, a habit that rendered him ill-suited to a political career. John Chavis, a mutual acquaintance of the two brothers, attributed Priestly's misfortunes at the polls to his "stubborn unyielding disposition" and his habit of condescension.[16] However, his legal expertise and social contacts made him a valuable asset to his brother. Priestly also appears to have been more cautious in matters concerning his personal health and safety. His rejection of excess in every form, for example, contrasted sharply with the recklessness exhibited by his brother, who often drove his sulky at high speeds and overindulged in alcohol. Surprisingly, their differences proved more often to be a source of amusement then a cause for discord. As an expression of his profound admiration and respect for his older sibling, Priestly named his second son

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[16] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 1:414.

Willie P. Mangum, Jr.[17] Shortly after Priestly's death in 1850, a deeply depressed and dispirited Willie Mangum wrote of his late brother, that for "all his peculiarities" he was "the best, & most honest male friend that I had in the world."[18]

By way of contrast, Willie Mangum's relationship with his brother Walter could best be described as ambivalent. The most mercenary of the three Mangum brothers, Walter's quest for wealth carried him far from Red Mountain. He left home with few regrets. His friends gone and the land "poor and barren," he could think of no reason to stay. Even his involvement in a hunting accident that claimed the life of his brother-in-law did not compel him to return to the comfort of his family.[19] In 1832 he prospected for gold in the mountains of western North Carolina. By the following year Walter had relocated with his wife and children in Tallahatchie County, Mississippi. There he earned a living raising cotton, trading in slaves, and speculating in land. By 1856, Walter's wanderlust had taken him to Louisiana by way of Alabama. Seven years later he fled with his family to Texas to avoid the turmoil of the Civil War. After the war, the refugees

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[17] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 1:14; 5:99, 749-50; Evidence of Priestly Mangum's role as a political and financial advisor to his brother can be found in all five volumes of Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum. For just a few examples see, 1:97, 118, 300, 366; 2:117-18, 378-79, 395-97; 3:143, 191; 4:299-300, 377; 5:13, 177; Boyd, "A Draft of the Life of Willie P. Mangum," 8:2; Nathan Sargent, Public Men and Events: From the Commencement of Mr. Monroe's Administration, in 1817, to the Close of Mr. Fillmore's Administration, in 1853, 2 vols. (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott & Co., 1875), 2:211.

[18] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 5:200.

[19] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 2:48, 339.

returned to Louisiana, where Walter died on January 20, 1868.[20] The physical distance separating Willie Mangum from his brother Walter may well explain an emotional dissonance between the two. Writing to his wife in 1836, Willie Mangum said of Walter, "I fear [Walter] is never to come to good & yet I feel the strongest & most painful anxiety on his account."[21] The passage of time did not bridge this gap. In 1854 Walter lamented to his older brother, "I feel we live too cold & inattentive to each other."[22] Despite Walter's plaint, there is no evidence to suggest that their differences were ever completely resolved.

Like many planters in North Carolina, William and Catherine Mangum established a general store on the grounds of their estate, near the intersection of the Oxford and Hillsborough highways. The store may have generated additional income for the family, but, more significantly, it placed the Mangums at the center of community life. On its shelves customers could expect to see canisters of tea, coffee, sugar, spices, salt, candy, and fruit as well as a wide array of nonperishables, soap, ribbons, cutlery, gloves, and boots. The store was also a locus of social and political activity. Neighbors and strangers

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[20] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 1:571; 2:48, 338-39; 3:211, 287, 295-96; 5:312; Weeks, "Willie Person Mangum," p. 239.

[21] Willie Person Mangum to Charity Mangum, 17 April 1836, Willie Person Mangum Family Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.; Walter's later involvement in the slave trade may have contributed to his estrangement from his brother Willie. Mangum family tradition alleges that Willie Mangum prohibited his daughter Mary from marrying a slave trader because he found the occupation disreputable. Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 5:760.

[22] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 5:298.

gathered there to read newspapers, drink spirits, converse, and gamble. On election day the Mangum's place served as the local polling center and throughout the year it functioned as a post office. In his youth, Willie Mangum worked at the store, where he learned the art of debate from customers who would sit for hours and argue about the latest political controversy or local event. Willie Mangum rapidly acquired a flair for oratory and an ability to joke and mingle with people that would prove useful in his public life.[23]

Young Willie Mangum's responsibilities at the store included more than simple clerking. His name appears alongside his father's in an account receipt dated May 30, 1807, suggesting that local merchants recognized the younger Mangum as a partner in the business. His father also entrusted him to collect debts from customers who had left the area without meeting their obligations. In 1808, Willie and one of his father's slaves traveled to eastern Tennessee to retrieve a man who had defaulted on his debt to the elder Mangum. Willie Mangum's journey into the Tennessee wilderness was not his first adventure away from Red Mountain. Late in 1802, he had stowed away aboard a tobacco wagon bound for market in Petersburg, Virginia. Once the party had gone too far to make the boy's return home impractical, Willie made his appearance, but William gave his son a lesson by placing him on horseback, where the cold autumn air gave the boy reason to regret his mischief. Despite such minor challenges to parental authority, William Mangum allowed his son to decide for himself which career he would pursue. When Willie

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[23] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 1:xvi, 1; 5:748; Kenzer, Kinship and Neighborhood, pp. 20, 37; Guion Griffis Johnson, Ante-Bellum North Carolina: A Social History (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1937), pp. 98-99; Larkin, The Reshaping of Everyday Life, p. 174.

confessed that he was "not cut out to handle a yardstick, and never expected to be a merchant," his father apparently never questioned his decision.[24]

Having learned the rudiments of farming and business at Red Mountain, Willie Mangum left home to begin his formal education. In 1809 and 1810, Mangum attended the Fayetteville Academy, where he studied under the Reverend Colin McIver. Before that, he had trained privately under Thomas A. Flint and a local African-American educator named John Chavis.[25] He studied briefly at the Hillsborough Academy before enrolling at the Raleigh Academy early in 1811. There he worked under the tutelage of the Reverend Dr. William McPheeters. One of the finest preparatory schools in the state, the Raleigh Academy offered courses in reading and writing at a cost of three dollars per quarter. Students willing to invest two dollars more were also taught "advanced" English and the classics. Mangum's test scores indicate that he had paid the higher sum. On June

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[24] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 1:1; 5:747-49; Censer, North Carolina Planters and Their Children, pp. xvi, 62.

[25] Mangum's exact relationship to John Chavis has been a subject of debate. Edgar W. Knight, Chavis' biographer, contends that the pedagogue's lifelong correspondence with both Willie and Priestly, particularly the manner in which he addressed the two, suggest a teacher-student relationship. Chavis referred to his former pupils as "my sons," a phrase he used frequently when referring to the Mangum brothers. The fact that neither Willie nor Priestly ever protested the use of this informal expression lends circumstantial support to Knight's contention. Dr. Archibald Henderson, author of a biographical sketch of Mangum published in the Durham Herald Sun, argued that the Chavis-Mangum connection was a fiction concocted by Knight in order to exaggerate the importance of his subject. Henderson offers no evidence to back his claims. Similarly, Mangum Turner, Willie Mangum's great-grandson, refutes Knight's contention without offering contradictory evidence. Edgar W. Knight, "Notes on John Chavis," North Carolina Historical Review 7 (1930): 326, 345; Herald Sun (Durham) 6 October 1935; Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 1:315-318, 506-508, 574-576; 3:478; 4:186-188; 5:753.

21, 1811, the Raleigh Star reported that he had "excelled" in the academy's semi-annual examinations, earning distinction for his comprehension of the "Odes of Homer" and "Greek Testament."[26]

Mangum's intellect also impressed Archibald Haralson, his roommate during his first term at the University of North Carolina at nearby Chapel Hill. On September 13, 1811, Haralson wrote that Mangum had "a mind of a speculative turn and was gifted with more than ordinary sagacity." Together the two young students studied Hume, Lucian, and others and discussed the "arguments and accuracy of their deductions." And while their conversations often digressed into the realm of "absurdity," Haralson found them to be enjoyable and beneficial.[27] The following spring, Mangum returned to the Raleigh Academy, this time as an instructor. While there, he again caught the attention of the local press. Representing the Raleigh Polemic Society, Mangum delivered a Fourth of July oration before an audience at the state capital, which the Raleigh Register described as "handsome and appropriate."[28]

Mangum attended the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill from 1811 to 1815. At the time the institution was small, employing a staff of three professors and one tutor. Like most southern colleges in the early nineteenth century, the University of North

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[26] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 1:xvi; 2:44-45; Weeks, "Willie Person Mangum," p. 239; Johnson, Ante-Bellum North Carolina, pp. 286-288; Raleigh Star, 21 June 1811. Hillsborough Recorder, 11 September 1861.

[27] Hoyt, The Papers of Archibald D. Murphey, 1:54.

[28] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 1:3; 5:417, 460; Raleigh Register, 10 July 1812; Johnson, Ante-Bellum North Carolina, p. 323.

Carolina continued to emphasize classical Greek and Latin literature and theology. University rules required students to attend public worship every Sunday. Tuition, room, board, and other expenses amounted to about fifty-eight dollars per session. The academic year was divided into two sessions: the first running from early January to late May, and the second extending from the middle of June to the middle of November. The students enjoyed active social lives, carefully balancing their schedules to accommodate both their lessons and the young women of Chapel Hill. In later years Willie Mangum would recall his days at the University as the happiest of his life, "when in 'sweet dalliance' we pluck the gay primrose & scarcely feel the thorn."[29]

Mangum most enjoyed his association with the Dialectic Society, one of the campus' two debating clubs. "The Dialectic Society," he wrote in 1838, "is more endeared to my memories & more interesting to my affections than perhaps even our venerable 'Alma Mater.'"[30] When he joined the organization in 1811, Mangum found himself in the company of young men who shared common intellectual, social, and regional backgrounds. The Dialectic Society drew its members primarily from the piedmont and western part of the state, while its opposite, the Philanthropic Society, recruited its members from the eastern counties. Clearly, the regionalism that defined

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[29] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 1:5-6; 2:529; Wyatt-Brown, Southern Honor, pp. 92-94; McDuffie, "Chapters in the Life of Willie P. Mangum," p. 15; Kemp Battle, History of the University of North Carolina, vol. 1: From Its Beginning to the Death of President Swain, 1789-1868 (Raleigh: Edwards & Broughton Printing Company, 1907), p. 230.

[30] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 2:529.

North Carolina politics during this period was evident in the social intercourse that prevailed at the University. The political alliances of the late 1820s were also partly determined by former club membership. Many young men whose names appeared on the rolls of the Dialectic Society would later occupy the highest offices in state and national politics. Among its distinguished alumni were future President James K. Polk, future United States Senators William Henry Haywood and Bedford Brown, future United States Representative Romulus Sanders, and future North Carolina Governors John Motley Morehead and Charles Manly. The connections Mangum made as a member of the society would serve him well in his political career.[31]

Beyond affording Mangum important professional and social contacts, the Dialectic Society gave him an opportunity to improve his debating, oratorical, and writing skills. He also learned about parliamentary procedure. Members conducted their weekly meetings with great formality, tolerating only the most innocent breaches of etiquette. Repeated violations of the organization's bylaws resulted in expulsion from the society. During Willie's tenure, the organization dismissed only one member while admitting scores of applicants. Willie served on several committees, including one created to establish a code of moral conduct for society members, and from March 17 to April 7,

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[31] University of North Carolina Dialectic Society Records, Minutes, 1812-1818, University of North Carolina Archives, Chapel Hill; "Catalogue of the Members of the Dialectic Society Instituted in the University of North Carolina June 3, 1795, Together with Historical Sketches," Printed for the Society, 1890, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill; Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 1:7; Max R. Williams, "William A. Graham: North Carolina Whig Party Leader, 1804-1849," (Ph. D. dissertation, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1965), pp. 28-29.

1814 he acted as presiding officer. The society sponsored a library for the private use of its members. There they would prepare their debates, the highlight of the weekly assembly. A review of the topics assigned, as well as the conclusions reached, reveals the character of the club's members. On August 26, 1813, romantics won the day with the assertion that love had a "greater effect on the minds of men" than fear. Such idealism appears to have been the exception, not the rule. One week earlier the polemicists had answered the question, "Is the prosperity of a nation promoted by continual peace?" in the negative. The group also decided that it would be impolitic to emancipate the slaves or grant foreign-born citizens the same privileges reserved for native-born Americans. The conservative bent of society members is evident in both the questions they chose to debate and the answers they agreed to record.[32] In 1858, more than forty years after leaving Chapel Hill, Mangum professed that "many of my most happy and agreeable reminiscences are most interestingly entwined" with the Dialectic Society. His sympathy for its collegial function and political principles remained undiminished by the passage of time.[33]

The onset of war with Great Britain in 1812 disrupted Mangum's idyllic interlude at Chapel Hill. The conflict exacerbated divisions between critics and supporters of the Madison Administration. These differences were especially acute in North Carolina, where Federalism remained a viable political force. Despite their genuine attempts to

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[32] University of North Carolina Dialectic Society Records, Minutes, 1812-1818, University of North Carolina Archives, Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

[33] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 5:356.

appear supportive of the American war effort, Federalists were unable to dissociate themselves from the antiwar sentiments they had expressed before the outbreak of hostilities. As the war dragged on and victory seemed more elusive, Tar Heels polarized into pro- and anti-Administration camps. These divisions eventually found their way onto the campus of the University of North Carolina and into the home of university president Robert Hett Chapman.[34] Chapman's frequent criticism of the war enraged his Republican students. In January of 1814 a group of pro-war activists ransacked the president's home, ran off with some of his property, and broke into the president's stable, where they cut the tail off his horse. Outraged, Chapman conducted a thorough investigation of the crime, but the hearing soon degenerated into a witch-hunt, as Chapman allowed hearsay and conjecture to implicate several innocent students. Among the witnesses called to give evidence was Willie Mangum, whose testimony included speculative answers to leading questions.[35] Mangum's cooperation with the sham trial led some of his contemporaries to question his allegiances and condemn him as an informer and a collaborator. Years later his political opponents revived the episode in the Jacksonian press in an attempt to portray

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[34] Federalists occupied as many as 40 percent of the seats in the North Carolina House of Commons during the war. James Broussard, "The North Carolina Federalists, 1800-1816," North Carolina Historical Review 55 (1978): 19, 36-37, 39; James Broussard, The Southern Federalists, 1800-1816 (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1978), p. 154-56, 176; Daniel M. McFarland, "Rip Van Winkle: Political Evolution in North Carolina, 1815-1835," (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1954), pp. 15-16, 21.

[35] Battle, History of the University of North Carolina, p. 233-36.

their rival as a reactionary and a "blue light federal speechifier."[36] Mangum never tried to hide his early political sympathies. On September 24, 1814, fellow student Stephen Sneed was pleased to inform Mangum that "the good old cause of Federalism continues triumphant" on the campus of the University of North Carolina.[37] In fact, Mangum's affiliation with the Federalist Party would continue as long as the party remained intact.

On June 16, 1815, Willie Person Mangum graduated from the University of North Carolina. The day-long commencement ceremony featured speeches, an oration on "natural philosophy" and four debates. Of the eighteen students to graduate that day, Willie Mangum was the only one who did not participate in any of the presentations. Mangum's absence from the podium suggests that he was the only member of his class to be denied academic honors. Despite his meager record, Mangum's affiliation with the University did not end on that summer day. In 1818, he earned a Master of Arts degree. That same year he became a trustee, a post he would hold until 1858. As a member of the prestigious board, Mangum helped restore solvency to the institution after years of declining enrollment and decreased funding. In 1845, the University rewarded his achievements with the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws. Ironically, two of Mangum's most powerful political adversaries, President James K. Polk and Attorney General John Young Mason, received similar honors that same day. Throughout his life Mangum would

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[36] North Carolina Standard (Raleigh), 15 December 1835; Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 2:365-66.

[37] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 1:5; Broussard, The Southern Federalists, pp. 181-82, 192.

remain loyal to his alma mater, advising friends to educate their sons at Chapel Hill and working to promote the interests of his fellow alumni.[38]

At the time of his graduation Mangum looked ahead to a bright future. His optimism was well founded, for his early training and experiences had adequately prepared him for the legal career he anticipated. From his first days on the family farm at Red Mountain to the long hours spent at the general store, he had gained a unique understanding of the people of Orange County. Local kinship networks gave him the support and influence needed by every new applicant to the bar. His academic training was likewise sufficient to the task set before him. By the standards of his neighbors, Mangum was a child of privilege. He had been given a good education and made important social contacts along the way. As he grew older these assets would prove invaluable. The foundation set at Red Mountain and elsewhere enabled him to move comfortably in elite social circles and provided him access to the highest reaches of power.

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[38] Battle, History of the University of North Carolina, pp. 247, 325-26, 496, 788, 823; General Alumni Association, The University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill: Alumni Directory (Durham: Seeman Printery, Inc., 1954), p. 590; Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 4:240, 306-307; 5:461.

CHAPTER 2
JUDGE MANGUM

Within ten years of his graduation from the University of North Carolina, Willie Mangum was already becoming one of the most influential figures in state politics. The protege of the well-connected Duncan Cameron, he had established a successful law practice, started a family, and served in both the state and federal governments. His rise to the North Carolina Superior Court in 1819 at the age of twenty seven won him the title, "Judge," an honorific which he never relinquished, despite future achievements. The appellation elevated his status beyond his ordinary lineage. The work, however, involved inconveniences that sometimes seemed to mock the deference due his judicial robes. He frequently complained about squalid living quarters, poor health, and dangerous roads -- so much so that Mangum never seemed happy riding the circuits and looked impatiently for an advancement far from such discomforts. At this juncture Willie Mangum developed his public persona. A favorite in courtrooms and on the hustings, he possessed an uncanny knack for anticipating the public will and adapting his mannerisms and voice accordingly. This receptiveness to change served him well in a time of political flux, as politicians scrambled to adjust to new circumstances.[1]

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[1] Henry Thomas Shanks, ed., The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 5 vols. (Raleigh: State Department of Archives and History, 1950-1956), 1:28-31, 35-36; 5:461, 750-751, 754-55.

Willie Mangum left the University of North Carolina bent on pursuing a life in politics. Like many others of his generation, he thought legal training the most appropriate way to prepare for that career. The custom of the day dictated that he find a patron with whom to study the law and aid his ambitions. Such a mentor was Duncan Cameron, a neighboring planter with ties to the state leadership. The son of an Anglican minister, the Virginia-born Cameron had made his fortune in agriculture before entering the North Carolina House of Commons as a Federalist in 1802. By 1824, he had served five terms in the lower chamber and three in the state Senate. An advocate of state funding for internal improvement projects, he also served intermittently as the president of the Bank of North Carolina, sat as a trustee of the University of North Carolina, and was once the clerk of the North Carolina Supreme Court. Between 1814 and 1816 Cameron, who was also a prominent attorney, served as a judge on the Superior Court. At the time of his death in 1853, he was one of the wealthiest men in the state, with several plantations and more than one thousand slaves.[2]

Duncan Cameron and his family made their home at Fairntosh, a plantation located approximately eight miles from Mangum's place of birth. It was here that Mangum

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[2] Biographical sketch of Duncan Cameron, Cameron Family Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, North Carolina; William S. Powell, ed., Dictionary of American Biography, 4 vols. to date (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1979-1991), 1:311-312; Harold J. Counihan, "North Carolina 1815-1836: State and Local Perspectives on the Age of Jackson," (Ph. D. dissertation, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1971), p. 64; James H. Broussard, "The North Carolina Federalists, 1800-1816," North Carolina Historical Review 55 (1978): 40; Sharon Kettering, "The Historical Development of Political Clientism," Journal of Interdisciplinary History 18 (1988): 425-26.

studied law. In exchange for his patronage, Cameron asked that Mangum tutor his two young sons, Thomas and Paul. The nature of Mangum's relationship with Thomas, the older of the two boys, is unclear. Born mentally disabled, Thomas never married and apparently did not have much contact with Mangum after he left the services of the Cameron family. Conversely, Paul developed a special rapport with his preceptor and the two became fast friends. Mangum's lifelong obligation to the Cameron family appears to have been a debt he paid without complaint. A grateful client, he would later use his political influence to assist both Duncan and Paul. He promoted Duncan Cameron's political fortunes, at times at some personal sacrifice, and often turned to his patron for council during election campaigns. Throughout his life, Paul Cameron, who would later inherit and expand his father's estate, advised Mangum on matters of local importance and lent financial assistance to the Mangum family.[3]

Willie Mangum excelled in his legal studies. An eager student, he spent his afternoons reading in the law office of Duncan Cameron and his evenings privately reviewing the day's lessons in his room at Fairntosh. Working well into the night, often by the light of a single candle, his alacrity won him the admiration of his mentor. The study of law in early nineteenth century North Carolina was an inexact science. The time allotted for aspiring lawyers to complete their education was indefinite. Applicants simply took the bar exam when they felt ready. As a judge of the Superior Court, Duncan Cameron had the authority to administer the state bar exam to his pupil. It remains

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[3] Powell, ed., Dictionary of American Biography, 1:312; Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 1:69, 82-84, 88-89; 2:291, 435, 528.

unknown if he chose to exercise this right; what is known is that Mangum passed the test. According to one historian, Mangum's success was not unusual, for the test was a mere formality. Nearly every student who took the bar exam during this period passed it.[4]

On March 2, 1817, the Superior Courts of Law and the Courts of Equity for the state of North Carolina granted Willie Mangum a license to practice law. The new advocate wasted little time in establishing a name for himself. Riding the fourth circuit, he moved from one courthouse to the next, building a reputation and making important contacts. He took on both criminal and civil cases and quickly mastered the art of manipulating his audience. Tall, good looking, and well dressed, the eloquent young attorney impressed jurors with his colorful, sometimes theatrical, displays. His face contorted, his lips quivering, his arms waving, Mangum would begin closing arguments in a whisper that rose with each syllable until the courtroom echoed with the sound of his deep voice. An ability to express complex ideas without ever condescending to listeners sat well with folks who appreciated the show of respect. When defending his kin, Mangum held nothing in reserve: any tactic was fair game when his client's freedom or life was at stake. One appreciative cousin claimed that Mangum's unrelenting cross-

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[4] Fannie Memory Farmer, "The Bar Examination and the Beginning Years of Legal Practice in North Carolina, 1820-1860," North Carolina Historical Review 29 (1952): 160-163; Hillsborough Recorder, 11 September 1861; Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 5:750.

examination of an unfriendly witness kept him out of prison. In time, Mangum's hard work would pay handsomely. For now, however, his thoughts turned to politics.[5]

Willie Mangum made his first bid for elective office at a time when the first party system, such as it was, had disintegrated. Prior to 1815, Federalism had been an important force in North Carolina. Strongest in the eastern counties, party lines in North Carolina mirrored long-standing regional divisions. Although reduced to a minority party after the election of 1800, Federalists continued to hold seats in both houses of the state legislature. As late as 1815, one third of state officeholders identified themselves as Federalists. Following the American victory at the Battle of New Orleans and the conclusion of the war against Great Britain, many North Carolina Federalists began to assert that the absence of a foreign threat had rendered political parties obsolete and had ushered in an "era of good feelings." Skeptics saw this as an attempt by the North Carolina Federalists to distance themselves from their counterparts in New England and the discredited Hartford Convention; perhaps, but the debate had changed. During the 1790s, competing forces within President George Washington's cabinet polarized over the conduct of American foreign policy. This factionalism gradually reached the state level, giving rise to an embryonic party system. With the Treaty of Ghent, old questions

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[5] J. G. de Roulhac Hamilton, Party Politics in North Carolina, 1835-1860 (Durham: Seeman Printery, 1916), p. 32; Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 1:9-10, 15, 34, 53; 5:417, 433-434; Hillsborough Recorder, 11 September 1861; Priestly Mangum's License to Practice Law, Willie P. Mangum Family Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

appeared settled and many officials in North Carolina and elsewhere found themselves in search of a cause around which they could rally the faithful.[6]

The postwar nationalist agenda of Henry Clay, John Calhoun, and other up-and-coming politicians proved to be the stimulant for political realignment in North Carolina. Naturally suspicious of any attempt to expand the powers of the central government, former Federalists formed the core of southern opposition to a national bank, the tariff, and federally funded internal improvements. Economic issues had eclipsed foreign policy as the primary source of dissonance in American politics. One constant factor in this atmosphere of uncertainty was the leadership. Despite new issues, new alliances, and egalitarian pretensions, the same class of men responsible for guiding North Carolina through the first party system would guide her through the second. Constitutional limits on suffrage, property qualifications for office holders, and the "voluntary deference" of the electorate assured that power would remain in the hands of the landed elite.[7]

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[6] James H. Broussard, The Southern Federalists, 1800-1816 (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1978), 181-183; Richard P. McCormick, The Second American Party System: Party Formation in the Jacksonian Era (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1966), pp. 200; For the best account of party formation during the 1790s see Richard Hofstadter, The Idea of a Party System: The Rise of Legitimate Opposition in the United States, 1790-1840 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969.

[7] Quote from Harry L. Watson, Jacksonian Politics and Community Conflict: The Emergence of the Second Party System in Cumberland County North Carolina (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1981), p. 91; Broussard, The Southern Federalist, p. 183; Thomas E. Jeffrey, State Parties and National Politics: North Carolina, 1815-1861 (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1989), p. 51; Marc W. Kruman, Parties and Politics in North Carolina, 1836-1865 (Baton Rouge: Louisiana Press, 1983), p.11.

The old lines dividing Federalists and Republicans had lost their significance. Leaders drifted from one faction to the next without regard to previous affiliation. Increasingly, personalities became the focal point of state and local elections, as office seekers and voters adjusted their allegiances with each new contest. Even before the collapse of the first party system, partisan identification among the electorate in North Carolina had been weak. Officials failed to create enduring organizations. Besides facing formidable logistic barriers -- most notably inadequate transportation and communication networks -- potential organizers confronted a populace hostile to the very idea of party. Most Americans regarded them as unnecessary, antithetical to republican institutions, and a threat to liberty. This prepartisan political culture dictated the nature of political discourse in early nineteenth century North Carolina. Candidates avoided any action that could be interpreted as advancing the interests of the few at the expense of the many. So while partisan identification remained a loose determinant of voting behavior during presidential elections, local elections continued to center on the personalities of the contestants.[8]

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[8] Watson, Jacksonian Politics and Community Conflict, pp. 66, 70, 80-81, 87; McCormick, The Second American Party System, pp. 177, 200; Richard L. McCormick, The Party Period and Public Policy: American Politics from the Age of Jackson to the Progressive Era (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), p. 157; Max R. Williams, "Reemergence of the Two Party System," in The North Carolina Experience: An Interpretive and Documentary History, eds. Lindley S. Butler and Alan D. Watson (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1984), 242; For an excellent study describing the role modern transportation and communication networks played in the formation of mass political parties see, Ronald P. Formisano, The Transformation of Political Culture: Massachusetts Parties, 1790s-1840s (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983).

Political power in North Carolina rested in the legislative branch of the state government and in the county courts. The state Constitution of 1776 provided for a weak executive, elected annually by the state legislature. Really nothing more than a figurehead, the governor had no veto power and controlled very little patronage. By way of contrast, the state legislature was "almost omnipotent."[9] Invested with the authority to appoint members of the judiciary, legislators also recommended local justices of the peace, who in turn dominated the county courts. The average North Carolinian rarely had any contact with state and national officials. To them, government meant the county courts, which had jurisdiction in most criminal and civil suits, performed essential legislative and administrative duties, and levied 75 percent of the taxes paid into state coffers. In effect, the bicameral legislature controlled, either by direct or indirect means, all levels of government within the state. Membership within that body was extremely fluid. Freshmen lawmakers comprised 40 to 45 percent of each new assembly. Despite the high turnover, the demographic makeup of the State House changed little from one year to the next. Property qualifications of three hundred acres of land for state senators and one hundred acres for commoners, precluded most Tar Heels from seeking elective office.[10]

Willie Mangum entered this milieu in 1818 with his first run for North Carolina House of Commons, the lower chamber of the General Assembly. The former farm boy

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[9] Kruman, Parties and Politics, p.45.

[10] McCormick, The Second American Party System, pp. 199-200; Counihan, "North Carolina 1815-1836," pp. 42-43, 170; Kruman, Parties and Politics, pp. 12, 45-46; Jeffrey, State Parties and National Politics, p. 50.

proved well suited to the rough and tumble of rural Orange County politics. In an age when voters expected their politicians to be both entertaining and edifying, campaigns took on a carnival atmosphere. As candidates debated on makeshift platforms, potential voters listened with rapt attention. During lulls in the formal proceedings, townsfolk could be found wrestling, wagering on horse races and other games of chance, or picnicking on the fare provided by their hosts. "Treating," a custom whereby office seekers provided their audiences with hard liquor and food, remained a common practice, despite having been outlawed at the turn of the century. Candidates also took advantage of court days, Sunday sermons, militia musters, and any other ready-made gathering, to deliver their messages or confront opponents.[11]

Willie Mangum felt at ease in these surroundings. Listeners appreciated his refusal to alter his speaking style with each new crowd. He abhorred the disingenuousness of well-heeled speakers who adopted folksy language when addressing rural audiences. Instead, he proudly displayed his erudition. Mangum's candor provided a welcome change. His impressive physique, mellifluous voice, and ready wit endeared him to local audiences. In addition to engaging voters from the stump, he often canvassed from house to house, concentrating on dwellings rumored to be unfriendly to his candidacy. Clearly, he was one of them, a local plebeian who had risen by the dint of his own labor to become a member of the ruling class. He embodied both the promise of democracy and the

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[11] McCormick, The Second American Party System, p. 201; Daniel M. McFarland, "Rip Van Winkle: Political Evolution in North Carolina, 1815-1835," (Ph. D. dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1954), pp. 27-28.

paradox of an egalitarian society; he had become a man of the people by rising above the people. They granted him their deference and allowed him to shape public opinion. In August of 1818, the citizens of Orange honored Mangum by electing him one of their two representatives to the House of Commons.[12]

In November of 1818, Mangum journeyed to Raleigh to take his seat in the assembly. The dusty streets of the little state capital were lined with brick and wooden buildings. A four-story brick tavern called Casso's stood as the tallest structure in town, and the three-storied Eagle Hotel offered visitors the most comfortable accommodations. Legislators who did not stay at the Eagle or one of the city's four other hotels, took lodgings at private rooming houses. In the evenings, lawmakers would gather at Casso's, the Indian Queen, or one of several other local taverns near the Capitol to drink, dine and relax after the day's work. Conversation often turned to politics, as debates begun at the State House concluded in the ale house. Politicians cemented their alliances over an apple brandy or glass of whiskey. Raleigh's informal style of politics aided newcomers like Mangum, whose personal charms worked to a much greater effect when lubricated by alcohol. Receptions at the Governor's mansion and "subscription balls" offered additional opportunities for young assemblymen to ingratiate themselves with senior officials outside the formal confines of the State House.[13]

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[12] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 5:430, 434; Martha Person Mangum, Diary, 12 June 1853, Willie P. Mangum Family Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.; North Carolina Standard (Raleigh), 21 August 1818.

[13] Counihan, "North Carolina 1815-1836," pp. 34-36.

In taverns and in the Capitol, Mangum forged alliances with some of North Carolina's leading statesmen. Orange County state senator Archibald DeBow Murphey proved an important ally during Mangum's first term. A close friend of Duncan Cameron, Murphey championed state funding for internal improvements at a time when many North Carolinians were reluctant to fund expensive projects. Mangum also associated with William Gaston, who, like Murphey, was a Federalist of long-standing repute. Bartlett Yancey, the powerful Speaker of the State Senate, likewise worked with the first-term commoner, albeit in an unofficial capacity.[14]

Clearly, Mangum had acted in his own best interests when selecting his confederates. Powerful men one and all, Murphey, Gaston, and Yancey would later assist Mangum in his ascent up the ladder of state and national politics. However, these alliances must also be understood within the context of regional factionalism in North Carolina. Divisions between wealthy eastern counties and the less prosperous west formed the basis of factional disputes as old as the state itself. Intermittent regional conflict, in evidence during the colonial period, became more pronounced with the collapse of the first party system. East vied with West over questions concerning state funding for internal improvements, judicial reform, and constitutional revision. The more conservative elements in the state, represented primarily by the eastern counties, subverted repeated efforts by western lawmakers to rewrite the state constitution. At issue was the question

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[14] Ibid., pp. 73-75, 103-105; Julian McIver Pleasants, "The Political Career of Willie Person Mangum, 1828-1840," (M.A. Thesis, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1962), p. 7.

of representation. The Constitution of 1776 stipulated that each county, no matter the number of inhabitants, was entitled to one state senator and two commoners. In time, the twenty-five counties of the rapidly expanding west outstripped the thirty-seven eastern counties. Westerners resented the disproportionate power of the east and fought to make population the basis of representation in the lower house. Unwilling to bear the burden of higher taxes, wealthy Eastern leaders used their numerical advantage to block funding for expensive improvement projects, thus retarding the economic growth of the entire state. As a spokesman for Western interests, Mangum naturally gravitated toward lawmakers who shared his neighbors' desire to reform the constitution and finance the construction of roads and canals. So while his early associations may have been personally advantageous, they also benefited his constituency.[15]

As a first-term Commoner, Mangum backed his powerful friends while retaining some degree of independence. He voted with the majority in favor of William Gaston's bill creating a state Supreme Court. Unquestionably the most meaningful legislation passed that session, Gaston's Judicial Reform Bill enjoyed wide support in western North Carolina. Mangum's affirmative vote, therefore, could only enhance his reputation with the people of Orange. He also voted "yea" on the issue of constitutional revision. This time his efforts came to naught: the General Assembly rejected a proposal to place the convention question on an upcoming ballot. Distancing himself from the pro-Bank stand

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[15] Jeffrey, State Parties and National Politics, pp. 49-54; William S. Hoffman, "Willie P. Mangum and the Whig Revival of the Doctrine of Instructions," The Journal of Southern History 22 (1956): 339.

of his patron Duncan Cameron, Mangum opposed a move to increase the capital reserves of three state banks. Mindful of popular prejudices, he spoke to his constituent's deep-seeded suspicion of powerful institutions when he harangued "banking institutions in general."[16] His work on the Committee on Public Education reunited him with his old classmate, Romulus Saunders. It submitted a plan to build schools in the outlying counties of the state. The assembly adjourned without acting on the measure, but not before Mangum had established himself as a friend of both education reform and western interests. In his first attempt at writing legislation, Mangum sponsored a bill designed to streamline the state's byzantine inheritance codes. Again, the act died with the end of the session. Finally, he acted on behalf of private citizens who had grievances with the state government. Over the course of the session, Mangum presented at least two petitions from individuals demanding payment on debts owed by the state. To be sure, he understood the reciprocity essential to reelection in a district as small as his own. On December 26, 1818, the session that began with high hopes ended in disappointment. Mangum had learned firsthand that politics in the Old North State moved at an excruciatingly slow pace.[17]

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[16] Raleigh Register, 24 December 1818.

[17] North Carolina, General Assembly, Journal of the House of Commons (Raleigh: State Printer, 1818), pp. 1, 16, 47; McFarland, "Rip Van Winkle," pp. 75-78, 80; Stephen B. Weeks, "Willie Person Mangum," in Biographical History of North Carolina: From Colonial Times to the Present, Samuel A. Ashe, ed., 8 vols. (Greensboro: Charles L. Van Noppen, 1905-1917), 5:239-40; Raleigh Register, 27 November; 4, 11, 18, 24 December 1818.

The impatient young attorney could hardly wait to resume his practice. Within four months of his return from Raleigh, he had turned a tidy profit. On April 20, 1819, he reported his good fortune to his brother Priestly, who had started his own practice nearly two years earlier. That Spring alone, he crowed, he had earned "upwards of $1900 in actual receipts." This new-found wealth enabled Mangum to travel in a style befitting the country squire he aspired to be. No longer did he ride on horseback with his legal briefs stuffed in saddlebags. Now he traversed the country roads in an "elegant," yet durable, sulky. "My prospects in the practice," he added optimistically, "continue to grow more flattering." Unfortunately, his prosperity proved short lived: Throughout his life, Mangum would be burdened with debt. Ever the romantic, he closed his letter with the news of his impending marriage. "I may be married this summer," he informed Priestly, adding that he would know better once he had concluded urgent business that awaited him in Raleigh. "You see what a romantic lover I am," he quipped, "[I] speak of settling the business when speaking of love, how cold, how business like, & how ridiculous."[18]

The object of Mangum's awkwardly expressed affection was Charity Alston Cain, the daughter of Sarah Alston Dudley and William Cain of Orange County. Born February 16, 1795, she had courted Willie for a short time before he asked for her hand. Family tradition tells of young Willie's persistence with Charity's father, who twice turned away the eager suitor before sanctioning the union. A wealthy planter from the Little River neighborhood, William Cain considered the struggling attorney a poor match for his

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[18] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 1:14-15.

daughter. Mangum's family background, future prospects, and youth worked against him, for Cain had hoped to strengthen his own standing in the community by marrying his daughter to an older gentleman of means. A shared animosity between William Mangum, Willie's father, and William Cain only complicated the romance. Mangum did not share his prospective father-in-law's pessimism. To him, the future looked bright. The money generated by his practice, he thought, was enough to support a family. Indeed, Mangum agreed that no man should marry until his finances were in order. In any event, the two were in love. The practical and financial concerns of William had little meaning for Willie.[19]

As the daughter of one of the largest landowners in the county, Charity Cain enjoyed superior wealth and status to that of her beau. In denying Mangum's first two applications, William Cain had acted in what he thought were the best interests of his family. His caution was understandable. Planter society abounded with fortune hunters trying to attach themselves to wealthy families. Mangum's decision to seek a bride outside his Flat River neighborhood might have lent him the appearance of one of these ne'er-do-wells, giving William Cain good cause for trepidation. Traditionally, matches between couples from different neighborhoods meant that one or both of the families involved were trying to establish favorable social and economic ties. Men and women interested solely in strengthening kinship networks married within their own neighborhoods. Surely,

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Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 1:14-16; 5:265, 461, 759; Martha Person Mangum, Diary, 30 January 1853, Willie P. Mangum Family Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.; Ariana Holliday Mangum, "A Short History of the Mangum Family," North Carolina Collection, Chapel Hill, North Carolina, p. 8.

Mangum, who had no blood ties to the Cain family, stood to benefit by the arrangement. So while Cain would not go so far as to arrange his daughter's marriage, he did reserve the right to interview hopeful bridegrooms. Having received Cain's begrudging consent, Willie proposed to Charity. She accepted and on September 30, 1818, the two were married.[20]

At their first meeting, Mangum might very well have regarded Charity's pedigree as her finest feature. If that were the case, it was a short-lived infatuation. Letters written over the course of both their lives reveal a deep, abiding love affair. Much enamored of his wife's beauty and sexuality, Willie often favored her with eloquent expressions of his adoration. "Indeed my dear," he wrote shortly after their marriage, "absence teaches me how rich a jewel my heart has treasured up, in my Dear lovely Wife."[21] The sexual allusions in his prose are unmistakable. "Indeed you must not think it romantic that my bosom would throb with pleasure's purest ecstacy, while my wayward fancy would hover around your pillow where all my hopes, my happiness & love lay in the sweet embrace of

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[20] Ruth Blackwelder, The Age of Orange: Political and Intellectual Leadership in North Carolina, 1752-1861 (Charlotte: William Loftin, Publisher, 1961), pp. 79; Robert C. Kenzer, Kinship and Neighborhood in a Southern Community: Orange County, North Carolina, 1849-1881 (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1987), pp. 14, 42-44, 200; Bertram Wyatt-Brown, Southern Honor: Ethics & Behavior in the Old South (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), pp. 206, 209, 273-75; Jane Turner Censer, North Carolina Planters and Their Children, 1800-1860 (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1984), pp. 68-79; Brent H. Holcomb, compiler, Marriages of Orange County North Carolina (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., Inc., 1983), p. 200.

[21] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 1:19.

sleep."[22] Her image invaded his dreams. Recounting what he called "the sweetest love dream that I have had in years," he described how he and Charity "opened a courtship" in a carefully manicured garden. The vision climaxed with Willie pulling Charity into his embrace and kissing her "over & over again."[23] Willie featured prominently in Charity's dreams as well, but the details of her subconscious were not committed to paper.[24] The sting of cupid's arrow infused Mangum with a renewed appreciation of outdoor scenes like the garden he visited in his dream. "Nature seems to have delighted in the grand & magnificent," he wrote during a visit to the mountainous western part of the state, "when she was piling in such whimsical combinations the vast allighenies [sic]."[25] At times his letters lacked their typical panache. After telling Charity of his desire to hold her in his arms, he asked bluntly, "are you growing fat?," possibly a reference to her pregnancy.[26]

Charity's responses, also marked by passion, carried more restraint. She wrote mournfully, telling of her loneliness and expressing concern for Willie's safety. "I cannot bear to think of the distance that we are from each other perhaps never to meet again should you be taken from me in the prime of life," went one such lament.[27] Part of her

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[22] Ibid., 1:24.

[23] Ibid., 1:539.

[24] Charity A. Mangum to Willie P. Mangum, 21 December 1823, Willie P. Mangum Family Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

[25] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 1:22.

[26] Ibid., 1:487.

[27] Charity A. Mangum to Willie P. Mangum, 24 August 1820, Willie P. Mangum Family Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

pain came from the knowledge that her husband was unhappy riding the circuits. In August 1820, she referred to his "disagreeable circuit," and prayed for his safe and speedy return.[28] Her compassion touched Mangum and called to mind the scene of their most recent parting. "At this very moment," he wrote, "my fancy draws with painful accuracy your very look & countenance at the instant I left you and my heart almost melts at the picture." The bitter image of her "eyes swimming in tears" haunted him, but he took comfort in her promise to remain strong and await his return.[29]

While the passage of time did not extinguish their passions, it did bring a change. Their letters retained characteristic expressions of longing, but the pain of separation seemed less acute. Habitually late with his correspondence, Willie often opened letters with an apology. He assured Charity that his failure to write did not mean that his ardor had cooled. "You are never to suppose for a moment," he wrote after one particularly long silence, "that I neglect to write...because I do not feel all [of] the affection & love that I had in our younger & happy days."[30] It seems Charity also found less time to write, for Willie frequently inquired as to the whereabouts of long-promised letters. In 1841, at the age of 49, Willie Mangum continued to speak with the voice of a young man in love. "I desire to see you very much," he wrote from his from his rooming house in Washington, D.C., adding, "I love you very much, and never know how much I love you

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[28] Ibid.

[29] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 1:28-29.

[30] Ibid., 3:299.

... until I leave you."[31] Unlike the notes written years before, this one combines the musings of the romantic with the self-confidence of a middle-aged man happy in a mature relationship with his wife. Shorter and more direct, his letters now featured as many references to the weather, his health, his children, and his plantation, as they did to matters of the heart. Similarly, Charity's letters included less pining and more talk of her children and the plantation. Like her husband, she continued to profess her love and complain about the long separations, but not with the pathos of previous years. Responding to her cousin's assertion that Mangum would make a good president, she joked that he "would not get [her] vote" because it would mean even longer hours and less time together.[32]

For much of their married life, Willie and Charity lived apart. Willie's law practice and long tenure in public service kept him away from the family plantation for months at a time. Charity's fear of steamboats may have been one reason for her reluctance to accompany her husband on his travels. Her duties at home presented a second, more practical justification. In her husband's absence, Charity assumed the task of administering the estate. With occasional help from her father, her brother William, and her two brothers-in-law, she looked after day-to-day operations of their 1,600 acre farm. Charity relayed her husband's instructions to his overseers and supervised the construction of their new house. When it came time to ship goods to market, she alerted her husband and asked for instructions as to what quantities were to be sold and what were

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[31] Quote from Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 3:176; see also, ibid., 1:225; 3:322-323.

[32] Ibid., 3:190.

to be used for private consumption. She also settled debts and purchased farming tools in her husband's stead. Business communiques between the two suggest that Willie Mangum considered his wife a trustworthy plantation mistress. Their companionate marriage also proved to be a useful business arrangement. The respect he granted her on matters of finance, however, did not extend to the realm of ideas. The recipient of a formal academy education, Charity's letters show her to be an intelligent woman capable of managing a business and raising a family. Be that as it may, her new husband thought that some topics, politics for example, were too complex for women and so made only passing references to the subject in his letters. He would later contradict himself, however, by insisting that his adult daughters read newspapers and keep abreast of current affairs. Doubtless this change in outlook came about as a result of the examples set by Charity and his three daughters.[33]

Private obligations did not interfere with Mangum's public commitments. As a county road supervisor, the pragmatic Mangum initiated construction of a three-quarter mile long spur that connected his homestead to an existing thoroughfare. This selfish allocation of public funds apparently went unchecked, for his popularity in Orange continued unabated. In April 1818, he predicted that he would defeat his opponent in his

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[33] Charity A. Mangum to Willie P. Mangum, 21 December 1823, Willie P. Mangum Family Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.; Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 1:225, 229; 2:18; 4:7-8; 5:759; Wyatt-Brown, Southern Honor, p. 214; Censer, North Carolina Planters and Their Children, p. 72; For more on southern women and plantation management see, Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, Within the Plantation Household: Black and White Women in the Old South (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1988) and Catherine Clinton, The Plantation Mistress: Women's World in the Old South (New York: Pantheon Books, 1982).

next run for Commons. Brimming with confidence, he added that it was only a matter of time before the people of the Eighth District elected him their representative to the United States Congress. He confessed to Priestly that he was frightened by his ambition. Public approval had filled him with a dangerous sense of pride, and only "sound judgement" prevented him from grasping for the "dangerous diadem . . . flitted before my vision & ambition."[34] The sin of pride was very real to his generation and any appearance of arrogance could hurt his career. Mangum faced the dilemma of seeking public office without seeming too eager to win. His reelection to the House of Commons in August of 1819 proved that he kept his desires well hidden.[35]

In November 1819, Mangum returned to Raleigh to begin his second term in the House of Commons. Joined by his mentor, Duncan Cameron, then serving Orange County as a state senator, the seasoned Mangum took a more active role in the Assembly. He displayed his new-found poise early in the proceedings by motioning for a minor procedural change. This maneuver would be the first of many that marked Mangum a crafty parliamentarian. Much of his later success was predicated on his special ability to

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[34] Quote from Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 1:15; see also, ibid., 5:749-750.

[35] Watson, Jacksonian Politics and Community Conflict, pp.72-73; John L. Cheney, Jr., ed., North Carolina Government, 1585-1974: A Narrative and Statistical History (Raleigh: North Carolina Department of the Secretary of State, 1975), p. 275; Raleigh Register, 20 August 1819.

turn the rules governing debate and procedure to his own advantage. In the national legislature this skill would help elevate him to the highest post in the Senate.[36]

Following Cameron's lead in the Senate, Mangum presented a series of resolutions calling for a constitutional convention. Submitted December 1, 1819, his plan outlined the terms by which freeholders would elect delegates and the issues these officials would debate. As with earlier drives for reform, this one reflected the power struggle between eastern and western legislators and centered on the issue of representation. Mangum proposed that "the representation of the people in the General Assembly shall be equal and comfortable to the principles of republican government." In other words, population should be the standard of representation.[37] Additional proposals included the popular election of the Governor and local sheriffs, provisions for the removal of inept or corrupt Supreme and Superior Court Judges, and biennial, rather than annual meetings of the General Assembly. Mangum's planned alterations to the state constitution reiterated a mistrust of centralized power, first revealed in his anti-bank philippics of the previous year. With these reforms he sought to limit the power of the state by making it more responsive to the public will. Again, this attempt to rewrite the constitution suffered defeat at the hands of conservative eastern lawmakers.[38]

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[36] Raleigh Register, 26 November 1819.

[37] Quote from North Carolina, General Assembly, Journal of the House of Commons (Raleigh: State Printer, 1819), p. 39; See also, Raleigh Register 26 November; 3 December 1819.

[38] McFarland, "Rip Van Winkle," pp. 97-98; North Carolina, General Assembly, Journal of the House of Commons (1819), pp. 38-40; Raleigh Register, 10 December

The rift between east and west also featured prominently in the debate over an internal improvements bill. Unlike previous battles, the opposition failed to maintain a united front and the legislation passed by a vote of 72 to 54. Designed to diversify the state's stagnant economy, the bill established a board of oversight charged with distributing funds for internal improvement projects. Mangum, a proponent of economic diversity, voted for the measure. He shared the sentiments of like-minded southerners who wanted to wean the region from its dependence on plantation agriculture. Their only salvation, he believed, was a modern transportation infrastructure built, in part, with state, not federal, money. Mangum did not share the agrarian idealism of his opponents. How he planned to finance these ambitious plans without the aid of lending institutions and without expanding the power of the state remained to be seen. The young assemblyman was too concerned with practical matters to perfect a consistent political philosophy.[39]

Mangum soon tired of life in the capital. Shortly after his return there, he complained to his new wife that "Raleigh is as dull & uninteresting to me as the squeaking of a scotchman's bagpipes." The carefree bachelor of a year before was now a lovesick newlywed. He looked with amazement at the changes he experienced since the previous winter. "At that time I plunged into the vortex of fashionable dissipation," he recalled, as time "sped away on swiftest wing." Now he described his company as "vapid." He

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1819.

[39] Harry L. Watson, "Squire Oldway and his Friends: Opposition to Internal Improvements in Antebellum North Carolina," North Carolina Historical Review 54 (1977):119; McFarland, "Rip Van Winkle," p. 96; North Carolina, General Assembly, Journal of the House of Commons (1819), p. 82.

whiled away his free hours, which seemed endless, alone in his bedchamber reading "tales of fiction." Official business offered little relief. Frustrated by the inaction of the legislature, Mangum seemed ready for a change.[40] Fortunately, his colleagues rescued him from the tedium. On December 22, 1819, the General Assembly elected Mangum a Judge of the Superior Court of Law and Equity.[41]

Mangum rose to the bench through the influence of Duncan Cameron. Initially, the senator tried to land William Norwood in the post. Opposition from rival power-broker John Stanly, who wished to see his relative George E. Badger win the honor, produced a stalemate. Eventually, Cameron induced Mangum to be his compromise candidate. In the General Assembly, the official records tell a simpler story. On December 20, 1819, the Senate placed James J. McKay's name in nomination and the House added Badger's to the slate. Apparently, Cameron dumped his first choice before the Assembly took any official action. Two days later, the House submitted Mangum's nomination and began balloting. After all three candidates failed to win a majority in the first round, McKay withdrew his name and the voting recommenced. Mangum won on the second ballot. Cameron and Mangum's back-room deal caused a brief stir within the opposition camp. Word of the episode did not reach the press, however, sparing both men

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[40] All quotes from Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 1:19.

[41] Raleigh Register, 24 December 1819.

potentially embarrassing allegations of cabalism or some other act popularly understood to be incompatible with republican government.[42]

Established in 1777, the Superior Court of Law and Equity exercised jurisdiction over both civil and criminal suits. Judges also discharged administrative duties that placed a variety of patronage posts at their disposal. The original Act of 1777 created six districts: subsequent addenda increased the number to eight and divided each into eastern and western "ridings." Courts convened for six-day sessions, concluding on the final day regardless of whether or not a trial was in progress. Even capital cases ended without a verdict if a jury had not finished its deliberation within the allotted time. A shortage of justices and the vast distances between courthouses necessitated such abrupt scheduling. Barring misconduct, judges retained their posts for as long as they pleased.[43]

At the age of 27, Willie Mangum had been guaranteed lifetime tenure in a highly respected profession. Unfortunately, he never enjoyed the job and contemplated resigning almost from the start. His first assignment took him to the Sixth Judicial Circuit, a territory encompassing hundreds of square miles in the mountainous counties of western North Carolina. He found the region rich in breathtaking vistas but little else. "Rambling

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[42] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 5:750; Penelope McDuffie, "Chapters in the Life of Willie Person Mangum," The Historical Papers, Published by the Trinity College Historical Society (Durham: Duke University Press, 1925), p. 20; Weeks, "Willie Person Mangum," 5:240; Raleigh Register, 24 December 1819; Hamilton, Party Politics in North Carolina, p. 32; J. G. de Roulhac Hamilton, ed., The Papers of Thomas Ruffin, 4 vols. (Raleigh: Edwards and Broughton, 1918-1920), 1:234.

[43] Guion Griffis Johnson, Ante-Bellum North Carolina: A Social History (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1937), pp. 622-25.

among the knolls" and the lush green hills encircling the village of Lincolnton, Mangum relished a rare moment of serenity. "Spring is rapidly clothing in her rich & verdant robes . . . the weather is soft & delightful."[44] Nothing, however, could alleviate his sense of isolation. "My desire to get home disturbs the sweet serenity of the scene," he reported from the isolated hamlet. To his relief, the people of that town displayed more refinement and culture than the folks he had encountered in the backcountry. Unable to hide his disdain, he described the latter as "a population as little congenial to my habits & tastes as the wild savage." It seems he found the rugged beauty of the landscape more to his liking than the men and women who made it their home.[45]

Mangum also suffered the ill effects of the cold, damp mountain climate. Unspecified health problems plagued him throughout the term. Spring storms washed away already treacherous roads, rendering many impassable. Unaccustomed to driving in such conditions, Mangum often found himself lying face-down in the mud beside his overturned gig. Surrendering to the elements, he gave up the comforts of his coach for the safety of the saddle. Overwork compounded his aggravation. "My labors have been most arduous," he complained, telling his wife that he had put in more hours in his four months as a judge than he had during an entire year as an attorney.[46] Mangum would not allow exhaustion to affect his demeanor. Presiding from the bench he cut an impressive

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[44] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 1:22-24.

[45] Ibid., 1:24.

[46] Quote from Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 1:24; See also, ibid., 5:570.

figure, exhibiting the same bearing that had won him esteem as a lawyer.[47] All his hours before a jury, however, could not prepare the young magistrate for the grim task of deciding matters of life and death. "It is not within the scope of my powers of language to describe my feelings on the first occasion that a man was tried before me for his life," he wrote shortly after handing down a decision in his first capital case. "I have just passed through two trials of that awful character," he confided to his wife, "the first was so critical that the weight of a hair would have saved or lost a life, & in that trying moment I was compelled to decide." The overwhelming responsibility was almost too much for the 27-year-old judge to bear: his depression was impossible to conceal.[48]

Reassignment failed to relieve Mangum's unhappiness. Late in the Summer of 1820 he was posted to the First Judicial Circuit in the northeastern part of the state. Impressed as he was with the vastness of Albemarle Sound and the nearby canals, he could not help but notice that the Edenton Circuit, as it was more commonly known, offered its own special kind of annoyance: mosquito-infested swamps. Again, his letters home stress a familiar litany of miseries; loneliness, illness, and discomfort. He painted an unflattering picture of his new environment as "a country filled with swamps, . . . flies & musquitoes [sic]." "It is very unhealthy," he added, stating that he had lost nine pounds since setting off on his journey. Inevitably, these conditions proved unbearable. In

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[47] Hillsborough Recorder, 11 September 1861.

[48] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 1:21.

November 1820, less than a year after his appointment, Mangum stepped down from the bench and returned home to Charity and his law practice.[49]

Privately, Mangum told those closest to him that his father's recent financial setbacks had provided an additional incentive to relinquish his judgeship. Mangum's ability to bail out his father was compromised, however, by his own pecuniary distress. Falling commodity prices and marginal harvests eroded part of his estate. Risky investments consumed even more. In 1819, Mangum, using receipts from his legal practice, purchased land in Haywood, North Carolina, a town situated at the confluence of the Deep, Haw, and Cape Fear Rivers. Initially, this venture turned a profit. Rumors that the state capital would relocate in Haywood, proposed bridge and canal projects, and long-promised improvements to the Cape Fear, stimulated land speculation in the area. The promise of further rewards led him to form a partnership with Archibald Haralson. The two purchased seven more lots in Haywood and part interest in a proposed toll bridge that would span the Deep River. When Haralson defaulted on his share of the note, his uncle, Archibald Murphey and Mangum assumed partial liability. Additional land purchases in Hillsborough and the collapse of the Haywood land boom put Mangum deep in debt. The ramifications of his bad investments would be felt through the end of the decade: financial security would elude him for the rest of his life.[50]

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[49] Ibid., I:30, 32-33.

[50] Ibid., I:xxiii-xxiv, 11-14, 17-18, 37-40.

To satisfy his creditors, Mangum solicited loans from friends and family members. His father-in-law William Cain became his most generous benefactor. The relationship between the two men had gone through some profound changes since their first encounter. Mangum used his position in Commons to promote Cain's views, encouraging him to visit Raleigh before important votes. Always deferential, he insisted that Cain come at his own convenience and not concern himself with Mangum's schedule. As a judge, Mangum made a habit of visiting with his father-in-law before setting off on his circuit. Ties between the two men grew stronger with the birth of Willie and Charity's first child. William Cain hosted his granddaughter during extended visits to his home and looked in on Charity while Mangum was away. On October 21, 1822, William gave his daughter eight slaves. The added hands surely made life on the plantation easier for the Mangums and improved their chances of generating revenue. Cain's tacit approval of Mangum's decision to stake his financial recovery on farming was not shared by Mangum's brother. Priestly objected to his brother's decision to remain a country lawyer and urged him to move to Hillsborough. "If you continue where you are," he warned, "[you will] gradually sink in the public estimation." The younger Mangum also felt that a residence in town would help Willie's political career by assuring "a better chance for a participation in the distributions of public favor." Mangum disregarded his brother's advice, choosing instead to launch the next phase of his political career from his estate at Red Mountain.[51]

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[51] Quote from Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 1:44: See also, ibid., 1:xxiv, 19, 29, 43, 247, 337-38.

CHAPTER 3
THE PRESIDENTIAL QUESTION

On June 4, 1823, Willie Mangum announced his intention to run for a seat in the United States House of Representatives in an election to be held that August. The race, between Mangum and General Daniel L. Barringer, soon degenerated into personal vilification, innuendo, and a narrowly averted duel. None of these features was alien to the voters of the Eighth Congressional District. Historian Harry Watson argues that this "predilection for gutter politics" served a higher purpose. Officeseekers, he insists, fell to undignified tactics to preserve the higher principles of republicanism. Any electioneering device was acceptable so long as it prevented unfit men from gaining control of the state. According to Watson's paradigm, candidates temporarily set aside their own virtue for the sake of the commonweal. The behavior of Willie Mangum and his cohorts suggest different motives. To them, ideology was something to be exploited. Every candidate, regardless of his factional affiliation or political viewpoint, invoked the same rhetoric, rendering the republican ideology of an earlier era so elastic as to deprive it of meaning. Instead of speaking to real concerns, candidates manipulated symbols and language to arouse their followers and confound those loyal to their opponents. Editors and printers participated in the game. Newspapers and broadsides functioned as

propaganda sheets, devoid of any purpose beyond electing their favorites and reaping the benefits of power.[1]

Mangum's declaration of his candidacy caught Barringer off guard. The general told supporters that Mangum had privately assured him that he would not be a candidate. Mangum, in turn, denied the charge, insisting that he had personally communicated his plans to the General. In either event, the two had made a silent accord that showed how meaningless republican virtue -- as modern historians interpret it -- had become. Once underway, the two began the business of campaigning. Convention prescribed that neither man openly seek office, but like Cincinnatus, officeseekers were supposed to enter the fray only because an alarmed citizenry demanded that they serve when the Republic was thought endangered. Again, Mangum and Barringer ignored the dictates of custom, which in fact had been eroding for some years. Whether in the guise of an apolitical meeting or through surrogates, the two campaigned up to election day.[2]

Constitutional reform quickly emerged as the most divisive issue of the campaign. On May 29, 1823, reform-minded leaders from Orange county met in Hillsborough to plot their course. The rump selected Mangum and four others to serve as their delegation to a statewide assembly scheduled to met in Raleigh that November. Speaking before a friendly crowd, Mangum reconfirmed his commitment to modifying the document, linking

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[1] Hillsborough Recorder, 4 June 1823; Harry L. Watson, Jacksonian Politics and Community Conflict: The Emergence of the Second Party System in Cumberland County, North Carolina (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1981), p. 77.

[2] Henry Thomas Shanks, ed., The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 5 vols. (Raleigh: State Department of Archives and History, 1950-1956), 1:51-52.

constitutional revision to internal improvements. By accepting the nomination, Mangum invited the disapproval of a considerable portion of the electorate. The Eighth District straddled both pro- and anti-reform counties. While most voters in Orange and Person counties advocated revision, a majority in Wake stood opposed. Realizing that this would cost him support in Wake, Mangum attempted to counter Barringer's influence there by painting him as a friend of reform. The General denied the allegation as the debate degenerated into a series of charges and countercharges. Mangum verified his claims by assembling corroborative statements from several of the district's leading citizens and releasing them in a circular letter.[3]

The testimonials of local merchant Thomas Clancy, former assemblyman James Mebane, and other highly-placed members of the community attested to the duplicity of Mangum's opponent. Each admitted that Barringer had indeed voiced qualified support for constitutional revision during recent visits to Hillsborough, the county seat of Orange. Perhaps the most revealing aspect of the circular is what Mangum chose to exclude. In the official release, Mangum stated that he and Barringer had agreed to curtail public appearances, emerging from the comforts of domestic duty only to attend Sunday sermons, visit relatives, or to run "errands of charity." "I was utterly astonished," he alleged in the circular, "to understand that Gen. Barringer was, on Sunday the 3d instant, thirteen miles from home, . . . not attending to divine worship, but talking to the people on the subjects

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[3] Ibid., 1:51-57; Hillsborough Recorder, 11 June 1823.

of elections and amending the state constitution."[4] To his friend Seth Jones, however, Mangum admitted that this self-imposed exile from public functions applied to Sundays as well. "I thought proper to omit that fact . . . lest it might hurt the feelings of some religious people."[5] Mangum's candor offers a glimpse at the discrepancies between what officials often said and how they actually behaved. It also calls into question the value of newspapers, pamphlets, and speeches as barometers of the ideological commitment professed by elite figures in early nineteenth century American politics. If both Barringer and Mangum were willing to tailor their statements to public notions of proper conduct vis-a-vis the church, what was to prevent them from doing so with regard to secular ideologies and institutions? Whether uttered by politicians or published by equally partisan editors, public pronouncements shrouded in the language of republicanism or any other popular conviction must be viewed with a jaundiced eye.

Barringer responded to Mangum's assault with an equally caustic circular. Dated August 9, 1823, it alleged that the affidavits included in his opponent's handbill had been written by Mangum's allies. With the election only a few days off, Barringer said he had no time to compile his own "certificates." Instead, his offered an "unbiased" account of events that would show that "trick and stratagem" were "the most prominent features in [Mangum's] character." He averred that the Judge intentionally altered his speeches so that they would conform to the opinions of his listeners. In Wake County, for example,

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[4] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, I:61.

[5] Ibid., 1:63-64.

Mangum was said to have spoken unenthusiastically about constitutional revision; in Orange he expressed himself otherwise. Responding to Mangum's insinuations that he championed the unpopular Bank of the United States, Barringer pointed to Mangum's long association with its leading proponent, Duncan Cameron, as evidence of guilt by association. As for the ban on electioneering, Barringer returned Mangum's charge of duplicity. While in Raleigh, Barringer chanced upon Mangum's overseer as he delivered campaign literature for his master, an obvious breach of their earlier pact.[6] Whether rooted in fact, fiction or both, the General's circular proved too little too late. The mid-August elections gave Mangum a 794 vote majority over his rival.[7]

Questions surrounding the authorship of Barringer's "scurrilous handbill" continued to surface long after the last votes had been tallied.[8] In a series of letters written between September 30 and October 17, 1823, Mangum and Henry Seawell, a local politician and judge, exchanged allegations of slander and improper conduct in connection with the circular. Only the intercession of their seconds averted a duel. The episode began when Seawell reproached Mangum for publicly maligning his name when he accused him of writing the document. Mangum admitted that he believed Seawell to be the author, but denied having made any remark that could be interpreted as derogatory. However, he did state that Seawell's participation in the matter came after he had pledged his neutrality in

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[6] Ibid., 1:65-69.

[7] Raleigh Register, 22 August 1823.

[8] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 1:70.

the election. Misunderstandings heightened their mutual animosity, as each man stubbornly postured to appear the more aggrieved party. Eventually the two discontinued direct communication and began speaking through intermediaries. Mangum even went so far as to go to Raleigh in anticipation of a duel that never materialized. In the end, the two settled their differences without resorting to violence. The incident showed Mangum's political immaturity. The newly-elected Congressman risked public censure and personal injury over a minor misunderstanding, one that could have been cleared up much sooner had either man issued an unqualified apology. It also earned Mangum the enmity of an important power broker. Later in life he learned to settle his disputes quickly, defusing troublesome situations before they became unmanageable.[9]

Before taking his seat in the national legislature, Mangum went to Raleigh to attend a constitutional convention. The extra-legal conference met at the urging of a caucus of western legislators, who had scheduled the event during the previous session of the General Assembly. Mangum arrived on November 11, 1823, the day after the conference began. Montfort Stokes, the venerated Revolutionary War veteran, presided over the proceedings and assigned Mangum, Bartlett Yancey, and five others to the Committee on Amendments. As with earlier efforts to alter the charter, this one turned on the question of representation. The relative absence of eastern obstructionists did not ease the process. The slaveholders in the central piedmont region found themselves at odds with the non-slaveholding yeomen who dominated the western delegation. While the entire body agreed

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[9] Ibid., I:70-79.

that population should be the basis of representation, piedmont delegates favored counting slaves as three-fifths of a person when calculating population figures. Westerners argued that only free whites should be counted. Mangum spoke in favor of the latter position and also moved to reduce property qualifications for office holders. Piedmont representatives emerged the victors, but in the process had created ruinous divisions within the reform movement. After five days of meetings, the convention put together a list of proposals drawn up by Bartlett Yancey and presented them to the incoming legislative assembly.[10]

The new General Assembly quietly tabled the plan submitted by the convention. Twelve years passed before advocates succeeded in revising the constitution. Mangum would not have to wait as long for his rewards. His actions at the assembly once again caught the attention of the press, which came to regard him as the chief spokesman for western interests. His motives were both noble and selfish. Clearly, the causes of democracy and representative government would have been better served by his initiatives. Equally true, however, is the fact that by expanding the power of the west he augmented his own reputation and power. The correlation between one's geographic power base and their support for constitutional revision was hardly a random coincidence. Western leaders like Mangum pledged themselves to lofty principles when speaking about revision, but knew very well the practical consequences of their mission.[11]

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[10] Raleigh Register, 14, 21 November 1823; William Omer Foster, "The Career of Montfort Stokes in North Carolina," North Carolina Historical Review 16 (1939): 253-254; Daniel M. McFarland, "Rip Van Winkle: Political Evolution in North Carolina, 1815-1835," (Ph. D. dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1954), pp. 148-150.

[11] Foster, "Montfort Stokes," pp. 255-256; McFarland, "Rip Van Winkle," p 151.

On the morning of November 26, 1823, Mangum boarded a stagecoach bound for the nation's capital. Shortly after he arrived he took the oath of office and began his inaugural term in the United States House of Representatives.[12] His first impression of official Washington was one that would stay with him for life. "So little of principle enters into the context of ambitious men for power," he wrote to his friend and mentor Duncan Cameron.[13] On December 10, 1823, Mangum relayed to Cameron news that "the Presidential question is here a topic of frequent, I might almost say, constant conversation."[14] With less than a year to go before the next presidential election, Congress buzzed with rumors as the leading contenders jockeyed for the first office. The official business of the congress, he believed, was subordinated to the unending struggle for power. Mangum saw little of the party spirit and devotion to ideals that he believed guided the founders of the republic. In their place stood ambitious men leading personal factions. The events of his first month in office were not all disenchanting. Surrounded by the greatest orators of his generation, Mangum made special note of the talents of Henry Clay and Daniel Webster. He wrote admiringly of the Kentuckian's "superior qualifications and transcendent abilities," and thought that maybe his ascension indicated that merit would determine who led in the post-partisan age.[15]

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[12] Willie P. Mangum to Phillips Moore, 26 November 1823, Stephen Moore Papers, Special Collections, Duke University Library, Durham North Carolina.

[13] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 1:84.

[14] Ibid., 1:83.

[15] Quote from, ibid., 1:82; See also, ibid., 1:109.

Listed as a Federalist in the official records, Mangum was in reality as uncommitted to old party lines as the men he had disparaged in his letter to Cameron.[16] As a conservative dedicated to protecting the rights of the states against what he saw as the encroaching power of the federal government, Mangum looked to fellow North Carolinian Nathaniel Macon as a natural ally. The aging senator proved a useful friend to the newcomer. Hailing from the eastern part of the state, Macon embodied conservatism and old republican ideals like no other man in North Carolina. He mistrusted banks, credit, and paper currency. A strict constructionist, he vehemently opposed federally funded internal improvements and articulated his resistance as part of a defense of slavery. "If Congress can make canals," he reasoned, "they can with more propriety emancipate."[17] Although Mangum never phrased his objections with such dexterity, he agreed that responsibility for internal improvements should be left to the individual states. Amiable and outgoing, Mangum also developed a friendship with nationalist John C. Calhoun of

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[16] John L. Cheney, Jr., ed., North Carolina Government, 1585-1974: A Narrative and Statistical History (Raleigh: North Carolina Department of the Secretary of State, 1975), pp. 675-76.

[17] Quoted in Harry L. Watson, "Squire Oldway and his Friends: Opposition to Internal Improvements in Antebellum North Carolina," North Carolina Historical Review 54 (1977):107; See also, ibid., p. 116; Robert E. Shalhope, "Thomas Jefferson's Republicanism and Antebellum Southern Thought," Journal of Southern History 42 (1976):548; Harold J. Counihan, "The North Carolina Constitutional Convention of 1835: A Study in Jacksonian Democracy," North Carolina Historical Review 46 (1969):358; Henry M. Wagstaff, State Rights and Political Parties in North Carolina, 1776-1861, (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1906), p. 42; Elizabeth S. Hoyt, "Reactions in North Carolina to Jackson's Banking Policy, 1829-1832," North Carolina Historical Review 25 (1948):172; Max R.Williams, "The Foundations of the Whig Party in North Carolina: A Synthesis and a Modest Proposal," North Carolina Historical Review 47 (1970):115; Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 1:305.

South Carolina. The ideological spectrum represented by Mangum's companions shows his willingness look beyond political differences in his private affairs, a tendency that stayed with him all his life and proved useful in furthering his political objectives.[18]

When not distracted by the impending presidential contest, members of the first session of the Eighteenth Congress occupied the majority of their time with internal improvements legislation and a new tariff. Early in 1824 Congress debated a measure that would grant the Army Corps of Engineers authority to survey roads and canals for military use or as postal routes. Mangum viewed the proposal as part of a scheme to expand the power of the federal government at the expense of constitutional literalism. As he saw it, the "ultra republicans," led by his friend Calhoun, had drawn up their plan with the full blessing of President James Monroe. "The new school has taken the principles of the old Federalists," Mangum worried, "but press their principles much further I mean on the subjects of internal improvements, etc., and especially in a latitudinous construction of the constitution generally." The nationalism of the old Federalist Party had been appropriated by men who called themselves Republicans. Strict construction, once the centerpiece of Jeffersonian ideology, had been laid to rest. Mangum refused to accept this new orthodoxy. On February 10, 1824, after nearly a month of discussion, he cast his vote with the minority against the bill.[19]

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[18] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, p. 1:xx, 109.

[19] Quotes from, ibid., 1:109; See also, United States Congress, Annals of the Congress of the United States, 18th Cong., 1st. sess., pp. 1399, 1468-69.

Mangum's opposition to the Tariff of 1824 demonstrated his practical commitment to southern economic development. Unlike his attack against internal improvements, he phrased his objections to high import duties in economic and sectional terms, rather than in constitutional terms. First submitted on January 9, 1824, the new tariff was conceived as the keystone of Henry Clay's American System. The initial proposal enumerated a long list of finished products subject to the levy. With ad valorem rates as high as 25 to 35 percent on certain raw materials -- wool, cotton, silk, hemp, and flax, for example -- southern lawmakers like Mangum complained of being trapped in a system that placed their region in a state of dependency. Forced to sell their cotton in an open market and to purchase Northern goods in a closed market, they denounced northern capitalists who colluded with the federal government to impose their repressive system. Mangum and others understood the necessity of generating revenue, but failed to see the wisdom of protecting domestic manufacturing if it meant higher prices for southern consumers and lower profits for southern planters.[20] In one of his few recorded statements of the session, Mangum mildly rebuked the tariff, "professing his general objections to the bill" on the floor of the House.[21] To his friend Seth Jones he offered a more colorful protest. "The Yankees will make the Southerners hewers of wood and drawers of water for them," he cautioned, adding with resignation that the lines had already been drawn, the North "will

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[20] Robert V. Remini, Henry Clay: Statesman for the Union (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1991), pp. 228-29; Annals of the Congress, 18th Cong., 1st. sess., pp. 959-64.

[21] Annals of the Congress, 18th Cong., 1st. sess., p. 1627.

be converted into a great workshop & the slave holding states will be compelled to pay them tribute."[22]

On April 16, 1824, the House passed the new tariff, which retained its most important protectionist features. Mangum joined the rest of the southerner delegation and voted against the final version. However, alterations to the original draft quieted some of Mangum's initial anxieties.[23] The day before President Monroe signed the bill into law, Mangum confided to Jones, "the bill as passed is not exceedingly objectionable, instead of being a law for the protection of Domestic Manufacturers, it is a revenue bill - It was gutted in the Senate."[24] He was wrong. The Tariff of 1824 was a protective tariff, with duties on most raw materials remaining as high as when first proposed.[25]

Little of what Mangum said or did during his first term in Washington was captured in the official records. Except for an occasional vote or brief remark, Mangum was a silent participant. His forte was watching and listening to those around him as they went about the business of governing. An eager student of power politics, Mangum learned that one of the first responsibilities of a new congressman was to bolster the good will of those who had sent him to Washington. Patronage seemed the most direct way to achieve that end; favorable relations with the press back at home was another. Sometimes

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[22] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 1:116.

[23] Annals of the Congress, 18th Cong., 1st. sess., p. 2675, appendix, pp. 3221-3228; Remini, Henry Clay, pp. 232.

[24] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 1:146.

[25] Remini, Henry Clay, p. 233.

he found he could combine the two tactics by establishing postal routes in his district that would be used to carry newspapers to more people. On December 15, 1823, Mangum reminded Thomas D. Bennehan, the brother-in-law of Duncan Cameron, of an already agreed upon plan to establish a 48 mile postal route extending from Raleigh to Roxborough via Fish Dam and Staggville. Mangum urged his friend to start a petition drive in support of the "Fish Dam" road so that he could present the idea to the House. In January, Mangum's neighbor and kinsman, John J. Carrington, described the project in politically expedient language. A new route, he implied, might extend the reach of Mangum's influence into the remote parts of Wake and Person Counties. Voters there would gain access to pro-Mangum literature. That February Mangum submitted to the House a proposed postal route that covered the same ground suggested in his letter to Bennehan.[26]

Residents of the Eighth Congressional District, like most people in North Carolina, obtained the bulk of their political information from broadsides and pamphlets. Ordinarily printed on a single sheet of paper, they were often reproduced in newspapers or distributed through the mail or by hand. Evidently, Mangum did not use his franking privileges to deliver this material when he first came to Washington. Later, after he had mastered the finer points of political management and organization, he used the entitlement regularly. Newspapers carried little information of local interest. Usually published weekly, periodicals tended to ignore the events taking place in their immediate vicinity, preferring

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[26] Annals of the Congress, 18th Cong., 1st. sess., pp. 798, 1627, 2654, 2659-60; Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 1:88-89, 104-105; Raleigh Register, 20 February 1824.

instead to print fiction, poetry, and national news.[27] An avid newspaper reader himself, Mangum regarded the local weekly as an excellent source of intelligence. Accordingly, he made common cause with newspaper publisher Dennis Heartt shortly before he took his seat in Congress. Keeping with common practice, Mangum volunteered to serve as an unofficial correspondent to Heartt's Hillsborough Recorder. On January 31, 1824, Heartt recalled to Mangum, "You must not forget your promise to furnish me with scraps of information as may fall within your observation."[28] Despite their differences over the coming presidential election -- Mangum supported William H. Crawford, Heartt preferred John Quincy Adams -- the two got along well. In time Mangum and Heartt would see eye-to-eye on the major political issues of the day, as Heartt became one of Mangum's most trusted and valued allies. Priestly Mangum later captured the spirit of the relationship when he jokingly referred to Heartt as "your little Irishman" in a letter to his brother. The use of the diminutive indicates personal intimacy while the possessive suggests a degree of influence.[29]

The presidential election of 1824 supplied Mangum with enough "scraps of information" to satisfy his publisher friend or anyone else who cared to listen. The congressman became a conduit for his friends and associates in North Carolina, feeding

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[27] John Chalmers Vinson, "Electioneering in North Carolina, 1800-1835," North Carolina Historical Review 29 (1952):175-76.

[28] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 1:112.

[29] Ibid, 1:164; Albert R. Newsome, The Presidential Election of 1824 in North Carolina (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1939), pp. 59, 143.

them details and offering his own observations and insights. His correspondence during these first months revealed that presidential politics had a profound effect on elected officials. Since his arrival in December they seemed to talk of little else. The machinations of Mangum and his colleagues also expose the undemocratic nature of the nominating process. Power brokers in Washington fought each other for months to win the right to name a successor to the incumbent president. Four of the five hopefuls mentioned in Mangum's first letters remained before the public through the November election. Public men presented the voters with a slate of candidates drawn from an elite pool. Lower echelon figures like Mangum conveyed the will of the caucuses, the factions, and the various state machines to the leaders in their respective home states and together they labored to lend the process an air of democracy.

Mangum came to Washington pledged to support Secretary of the Treasury William H. Crawford of Georgia for the presidency. The contest had been an issue in his race with Barringer, and Mangum stood firmly behind the Georgian throughout. Of the five candidates who remained in the running in December 1823, Mangum believed that only Crawford possessed the states rights credentials essential to winning a majority of North Carolina voters. He perceived the other four -- Clay, Calhoun, Adams, and Andrew Jackson -- as nationalists. In Raleigh the Crawfordites secured their control of the General Assembly with the reelection of Bartlett Yancey to the post of Speaker of the Senate. In Commons, Robert Strange, another member of the pro-Crawford faction, completed the coup with his election to the head of that body. On December 2, 1823, the organization flexed its muscle by awarding Joseph Gales & Son, publishers of the Raleigh Register, the

state's leading pro-Crawford organ, the lucrative public printing contract. Nathaniel Macon led the pro-Crawford Tar Heels in Washington. Strict constructionists and proponents of thrifty government from across North Carolina rallied behind the Georgian to become the dominant faction in the state. On December 24, 1823, their elected representatives held a caucus in the senate chamber and nominated Crawford for the presidency. Before adjourning, they named a seven-member committee of correspondence and began organizing their campaign.[30]

William Harris Crawford had been a front-runner in the race to succeed Monroe since about 1820. In 1816 he had polled a close second to the eventual nominee at that year's Congressional caucus. As Monroe's Secretary of the Treasury he commanded vast reserves of patronage. He used this prerogative to build a loyal following of officeholders and political appointees. Among the populace, however, his appeal was confined to the South and New York State. Especially popular with the older states rights Jeffersonians, the fifty-one year old Crawford opposed protective tariffs and federally funded internal improvements. Among the heirs to Federalism in North Carolina, Mangum was unique

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[30] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 1:101, 105; McFarland, "Rip Van Winkle," pp. 143-45; William S. Hoffman, Andrew Jackson and North Carolina Politics (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1958), p. 3; James F. Hopkins, "Election of 1824," in Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., Fred L. Israel, and William P. Hansen, eds., History of American Presidential Elections: 1789-1968, 4 vols. (New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1971), 1:374; Richard P. McCormick, The Second Party System: Party Formation in the Jacksonian Era (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1966), pp. 202-03; Newsome, The Presidential Election of 1824, p. 62, 102-03; Thomas E. Jeffrey, State Parties and National Politics: North Carolina, 1815-1861 (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1989), p. 21.

in his support for Crawford.[31] Of all the candidates, Mangum thought Crawford a "sounder constitutionalist" than his opponents, one who promised an administration "marked with economy & . . . rigid accountability."[32]

Handicapped by reports of failing health, his association with the unpopular congressional caucus, and the uninspired choice of Albert Gallatin as a running mate, Crawford faced an uphill battle in North Carolina. The rise of Andrew Jackson provided a fatal blow to the state's already moribund Crawford movement. Throughout the campaign, Mangum struggled to preserve the Crawford coalition. In September 1823, the Georgian suffered a debilitating stroke, leaving him partially blind and bedridden. The candidate's health disheartened his followers, but they still refused to disclose the full extent of his illness to the public.[33] At first Mangum conveyed a sense of pessimism about Crawford's condition. He "is very ill," Mangum wrote in December, "[and] tho [sic] his physicians pronounce him out of danger, yet many entertain doubts of his recovery."[34] One month later he evidenced more optimism. While still very sick and sequestered in a darkened room with his eyes bandaged, Crawford's convalescence was proving beneficial.

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[31] Richard P. McCormick, The Presidential Game: The Origins of American Presidential Politics (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), p. 124; McFarland, "Rip Van Winkle," p. 140; Hopkins, "Election of 1824," 1:351-52, 359, 367; Wagstaff, State Rights and Political Parties, p. 45; James H. Broussard, The Southern Federalists, 1800-1816 (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1978), 191-92.

[32] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 1:116.

[33] Newsome, The Presidential Election of 1824, pp. 106-07; Hopkins, "Election of 1824," 1:367.

[34] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 1:89.

Despite Mangum's repeated assurances that he was on the mend, the candidates's health remained an issue. As the others entertained their supporters at lavish dinner parties and elegant balls, Crawford remained conspicuously absent from the affairs that marked an election year.[35]

Mangum also had to refute rumors circulating about his own loyalties. Apparently, his abundantly-detailed accounts of affairs in Congress had left some of his friends wondering whom he supported. On January 12, 1824, John Carrington wrote Mangum, "You said a good deal about the Presidential Election and I thought you appeared something wandering and did not know well which side to take."[36] Less wary, Seth Jones inquired, "I should like (as your friend) to know if you have changed your mind & if so your reasons, & who you are for now."[37] Mangum reacted quickly and without equivocation. "I have only to say," he responded, "that [the rumors are] wholly without foundation." As if to further placate their suspicions, Mangum added that he had never been more certain that "the best interests of this country require the elevation of Mr. Crawford to the presidential chair."[38] The source of these rumors remains unknown. The fact that they surfaced shortly before a pro-Crawford congressional caucus was scheduled to meet in Washington may provide a clue as to why they started.

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[35] Ibid., 1:109, 115.

[36] Ibid., 1:105.

[37] Ibid., 1:101.

[38] Ibid., 1:115.

An avowed opponent of caucuses, Mangum had made it clear that he would not attend the February 14 assemblage. Dismissed as relics of a bygone era, congressional caucuses as nominating bodies had come under attack in recent years. A public informed by antiparty ideals would no longer tolerate closed-door, elite-dominated mechanisms like the caucus. Three state legislatures expressed formal disapproval of the caucus: Five states sent only one representative to the gathering, and ten refused to take any part at all. Six of the fifteen members of the North Carolina delegation in Washington, including Senators John Branch and Nathaniel Macon, declined participation. Aware that Crawford's men controlled the meeting from the onset, his opponents tried to prevent the event from taking place. Failing that, supporters of Jackson, Adams, and Clay, chose to boycott the caucus. On February 14, 1824, sixty-eight delegates assembled to select their nominee. Confronting only token opposition, the Crawford forces easily won the day. The session named Albert Gallatin to the second spot and dissolved without a platform.[39]

Mangum played to popular prejudices with his condemnation of the caucus. Although committed to the candidate endorsed by the caucus and working with some of the most well-organized factions in the country, he continued to portray himself as an antiparty populist. The image pleased a large segment of his constituency. To William

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[39] The final vote of the caucus delegates went as follows, William Crawford, 64; John Quincy Adams, 2; Andrew Jackson, 1; Nathaniel Macon, 1; Raleigh Register, 27 February 1824; Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 1:115-16; Richard Hofstadter, The Idea of a Party System: The Rise of Legitimate Opposition in the United States, 1780-1840 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), p. 252; Hopkins, "Election of 1824," 1:360, 368-70, 374; Newsome, The Presidential Election of 1824, p. 82; McCormick, The Presidential Game, pp. 5, 118-19, 133.

Haywood the caucus was nothing less than a "breach in our constitution."[40] John F. Brevard of Lincoln County, North Carolina, informed Mangum that "the publick [sic] sentiment [regarding the caucus] . . . is universally reprebate [sic]." His state, he continued, was free from "that spirit of organised [sic] faction which exhibits itself so thoroughly in the state of New York, & in Virginia."[41] In fact, Mangum and his partners in the pro-Crawford faction in North Carolina worked closely with Martin Van Buren and William Marcy, two members of New York's powerful Albany Regency.[42] On March 6, 1824, the Carolina Sentinel commended Mangum and the five other North Carolinians "who refused to misrepresent the sentiments of their constituents, or to give countenance to dictation and intrigue, by attending the Radical caucus at Washington."[43] While he warmly supported William Crawford, Mangum was not entirely happy with the outcome of the caucus. He thought Albert Gallatin a poor choice for the second spot. The Swiss-born, former Secretary of the Treasury, Mangum told Romulus Saunders, would not run well in North Carolina. Gallatin himself agreed and in September withdrew from the ticket.[44]

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[40] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 1:137.

[41] Ibid., 1:123.

[42] Hofstadter, The Idea of a Party System, p. 252.

[43] Carolina Sentinel (New Bern), 6 March 1824.

[44] J. G. de Roulhac Hamilton, ed., The Papers of Thomas Ruffin, 4 vols. (Raleigh: Edwards and Broughton, 1918-1920), 1:296; Hopkins, "Election of 1824," 1:370.

Before Andrew Jackson emerged as a major contender, John C. Calhoun had been Crawford's strongest challenger for the hearts and minds of North Carolina. In addition to the five above named individuals, the original cast of presidential aspirants included DeWitt Clinton of New York and William Lowndes of South Carolina. In October 1823 Lowndes died, leaving South Carolina with only one favorite son.[45] As a backer of Crawford, Mangum worried little about the threat posed by Calhoun. "Mr. Calhoun cannot get more than [South] Carolina & New Jersey unless his prospects shall materially change," he predicted. "Even if he should get [North Carolina], which I cannot for a moment believe, still the vote would be thrown away."[46] Mangum's main objection to both Calhoun and Henry Clay was their nationalism. He imagined with dread the extravagance both would bring to the Oval Office. "I have felt alarm," he wrote, "at the splendor & profuse policy that I think would characterize the administration of either Clay or Calhoun."[47] Most North Carolinians shared Mangum's suspicion of Calhoun and his costly programs.[48]

Clay's spendthrift nationalism was not the only thing Mangum found objectionable about the Kentuckian. As Speaker of the House, Clay had recast the office into one of

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[45] Hopkins, "Election of 1824," 1:350-51, 361-363.

[46] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 1:116.

[47] Ibid.

[48] Newsome, The Presidential Election of 1824, p. 129.

unrivaled power.[49] Such a concentration of authority struck Mangum as anathema to democracy. He thought Clay would use his considerable influence to affect the outcome of the next presidential contest. If the November election concluded without one candidate garnering a majority of the electoral votes then the House of Representatives would choose a new president from one of the three top vote-getters. As the election drew nearer Mangum began to see this turn of events as a distinct possibility. On February 11, 1824, he wrote "unless the caucus shall produce considerable effect I am satisfied that an election cannot be made by the people and will ultimately come to the House of Representatives." After summarizing the regional strengths of each of the leading candidates, Mangum added, "if Mr. Clay gets into the H. of R. the American people need not be surprised if he is made president." His state-by-state analysis provides evidence that Mangum had become an astute observer of political trends around the nation. The accuracy of his early prognostication, however, was compromised by the withdrawal of John Calhoun later that Spring.[50]

So much of Calhoun's political fortunes hinged on his ability to win votes outside the South. He hoped to gain much needed support in the heavily-populated middle Atlantic states, notably Pennsylvania and New Jersey. His backers there assured him that they could deliver the votes. All hope evaporated in March 1824 when the Pennsylvania

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[49] George B. Galloway, History of the House of Representatives, 2nd. edition, revised by Sidney Wise (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1976), p. 111; Steven S. Smith and Christopher J. Deering, Committees in Congress (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly Press, 1984), pp. 14-15.

[50] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 1:116.

state convention nominated Andrew Jackson for the presidency with only one dissenting vote. Sensing his declining fortunes, Calhoun decided to throw his considerable weight behind the candidacy of the General. The new alliance immediately became a force in North Carolina, where Calhoun now moved from the first to the second spot on what his supporters there had labeled "the Peoples Ticket." The real contest in North Carolina featured Jackson against Crawford, for neither Clay nor Secretary of State John Quincy Adams, the other two remaining contestants, appealed to the states rights conservatives who dominated the Old North State.[51]

Crawford and Jackson's personal animosity toward one another gave the campaign an added dimension. In an election centered on personalities rather than issues, problems of political economy were superceded by differences of character. William Crawford challenged the legality of the General's incursions into Spanish Florida and renounced as unjust the treaties he had negotiated with native American tribes in the Southeast.[52] Mangum never mentioned any of Jackson's indiscretions when he spoke of the General. His silence possibly grew from his unwillingness to alienate the growing legion of Jacksonians in North Carolina. In April 1824, word of Jackson's popularity back home crossed Mangum's desk in Washington. Priestly informed his brother of Jackson's appeal with folks in the western part of the state who sang his praises at every public event.

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[51] Hopkins, "Election of 1824," 1:366-67, 374; Newsome, The Presidential Election of 1824, pp. 83-85, 100-01.

[52] McCormick, The Presidential Game, p. 5; Charles Grier Sellers, Jr., "Jackson Men With Feet of Clay," American Historical Review 62 (1957):538.

William H. Haywood told a similar tale. On April 17, he declared, "I am fully satisfied that without a great revolution in the public sentiment of this state that Genl. Jackson will be the favorite for the next presidency."[53] For his part, Mangum voiced qualified approval for the hero of New Orleans. "Gen. Jackson with all my objections to him," he wrote half-heartedly, "I should prefer to Mr. Calhoun."[54]

Jackson's reputation was not the only one stained by an unscrupulous opposition. In a campaign rife with dirty tricks, every candidate fell prey to unsubstantiated rumors leveled by unnamed individuals using dubious evidence. Congressman Jonathan Russell of Massachusetts, for example, falsified letters in an attempt to discredit John Quincy Adams with voters in the western states. Only the intervention of President Monroe, who confirmed that the documents in question had been altered, silenced reports that the Secretary of State had been willing to grant Great Britain unlimited navigation rights along the Mississippi River as part of the Treaty of Ghent. In January 1823, a pro-Calhoun newspaper based in Washington, D.C. printed the first in a series of letters implicating Crawford in a minor scandal. Writing under the alias "A.B.," Illinois Senator Ninian Edwards claimed that the Secretary had misused government funds during the Panic of 1819 and later withheld information from Congress in order to conceal his complicity in

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[53] Quote from, Shanks, The Papers of Willie P Mangum, 1:137; See also, ibid., 1:134, 139.

[54] Ibid., 1:116.

the affair.[55] In a scene rarely witnessed on the floor of the House, the normally taciturn Mangum spoke out in defense of the Secretary. He called for an inquiry, proclaiming Crawford's innocence all the while. Late in May 1824, a special investigative committee vindicated the young congressman when it exonerated Crawford.[56] Events had left Mangum disenchanted and jaded. Reflecting on the episode in a letter to his friend Seth Jones, he wrote "Crawford has to contend against the most powerful combination & I fear as unprincipled as powerful." Still hopeful, however, he closed with his oft repeated prediction that Crawford would win in November. As for Ninian Edwards, the erstwhile Judge seemed to concur with his friend John Randolph, who said that the perjurer should have his ears lopped off.[57]

The Ninian Edwards affair prolonged an already drawn out session and delayed Mangum's return to Red Mountain. Afflicted with the same homesickness he had known on the judicial circuit, Mangum's enthusiasm for Washington diminished with each passing month. By March 14, 1824 he had lost interest in the city's gay nightlife, telling his wife that he would forego social events altogether if he could do so without appearing rude or asocial. Cold winter evenings and poorly-ventilated rooms conspired to impair Mangum's health.[58] The birth of his first child, Sallie Alston Mangum, only intensified his yearning

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[55] Harry Ammon, James Monroe: The Quest for National Identity (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1971), pp. 505-07, 512-513; Hopkins, "Election of 1824," 1:365; McCormick, The Presidential Game, pp. 124-25.

[56] Annals of the Congress, 18th Cong., 1st. sess., pp. 2654-2660, 2713-2725.

[57] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 1:146.

[58] Ibid., 1:124.

to get back home. Born January 6, 1824, she instantly became a source of pride and concern for both her parents who wrote lovingly of her in all their letters.[59] Describing the newborn to her absent husband, Charity Mangum joked, "she has a beautiful little head & her hair is very like her father's, [only] thicker on the top."[60] From his lodgings in the capital, the new father could only sit and wonder what his baby daughter was like. Lonely and eager to learn as much as he could about the girl, Mangum pumped his wife for details: "Can she talk? Does she seem conscious and observing? Does she seem to know that she has gotten into a very naughty world? Does she know where her Pa is?" So far removed from home, he had to rely on second-hand descriptions and his own preconceptions to form an imperfect impression of her. "I am afraid she is like too many young ladies," he imagined of Sallie, "giddy & unthinking."[61]

The first session of the eighteenth Congress ended shortly after it had concluded closed-door hearings on the Ninian Edwards affair. Mangum, along with most partisans in Washington, immediately set off for home to help run the last leg of the presidential race. Following a joyous reunion with his family, the congressman set out for the hustings. His new status gave him an air of dignity and credibility that others wished to exploit. Crawford organizers in the state enlisted multiple speakers at a single venue,

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[59] Priestly H. Mangum to Willie P. Mangum, 14 January 1824, Willie P. Mangum Family Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.; Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 1:103-04.

[60] Charity A. Mangum to Willie P. Mangum, 2 February 1824, Willie P. Mangum Family Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

[61] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 1:125.

believing that the public would be more likely to accept a message delivered by more than one person. During the late summer and early autumn Mangum shared the stump with Thomas Ruffin and many other Crawfordites native to his district. He also campaigned through the mails, urging his friends and associates to get out the vote for Crawford.[62]

Despite their best efforts, the Crawford forces in North Carolina failed to deliver their state's fifteen electoral votes in the November election. Instead, supporters of Jackson's "People's Ticket," a combination of former Federalist and anti-caucus Republicans, carried the day. Jackson's victory heralded the breakdown of both Republican solidarity and eastern-dominated politics in North Carolina. The new coalition comprised elements that had once been at odds with one another. Counties along the Albemarle Sound in the east combined with western counties to create a formidable alliance against the powerful plantation districts of the middle-eastern portion of the state. Mangum's home county of Orange gave the General a slight majority of forty-seven votes, putting his chances for reelection in 1825 in jeopardy. Jackson's edge in the statewide tally was considerably more authoritative. Polling 20,415 popular votes, he easily outdistanced his closest rival William Crawford, who took in 15,621 of the 36,036 total votes cast.[63]

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[62] Hamilton, The Papers of Thomas Ruffin, 1:311-12; Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 1:153-54.

[63] Hopkins, "Election of 1824," 1:371, 374, 409; Jeffrey, State Parties and National Politics, pp. 29-30; Marc W. Kruman, Parties and Politics in North Carolina, 1836-1865 (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1983), p. 18; Williams, "The Foundations of the Whig Party in North Carolina," p. 116; McCormick, The Second Party System, p. 203; Newsome, The Presidential Election of 1824, pp. 156, 161.

In the national contest, Jackson captured more electoral votes than his three rivals but failed to win the amount needed to take the election. As a result, the contest was thrown into the House of Representatives where each state delegation had one vote. In December 1824, the second session of the eighteenth Congress met in Washington and immediately set about deciding the unfinished contest. Once again, "the presidential question" took center stage in American politics. Contrary to the leanings of the electorate, most of the North Carolina contingent remained steadfastly committed to William Crawford. In spite of having served only a single term in Congress, Mangum stepped forward as a leader of his state's pro-Crawford forces. Romulus Saunders shared the responsibility of marshaling this faction behind the Georgian. In mid-December 1824, Mangum felt that Jackson stood the best chance of winning in the House, but vowed to his friends in North Carolina that Jackson would not get his vote. He could not speculate about the outcome with a great deal of confidence because he did not know who Henry Clay would support. Mangum suspected that Clay, whose last place showing in November had disqualified him from the House election, would prove to be the wildcard. Whomever the Speaker chose to back, Mangum guessed, would win.[64]

Mangum's seemingly innocuous observation that Andrew Jackson appeared to be the strongest contender soon came back to haunt him. By the time his prediction had reached Bartlett Yancey in Raleigh, it had been reworded so as to suggest that Mangum had changed his loyalties and now stood behind Andrew Jackson. Nothing could be more

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[64] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 1:160; Hoffman, Andrew Jackson and North Carolina Politics, p. 7.

absurd, Mangum reassured Yancey in a letter written on Christmas Day, 1824. He continued to hold out the possibility, however, that the North Carolina delegation might try to use its vote as a bargaining chip if Crawford's chances began to appear hopeless. Conversations with representatives from around the country led Mangum to believe that Jackson was fading and that Adams had taken his place at the front of the pack.[65] Writing from his father-in-law's home near Wake Forest, North Carolina, Priestly Mangum thought Jackson's chances remained very good. He shared his brother's concern that as a military figure Jackson would be inclined to dictate, rather than respond to "the popular impulse of the nation." Neither brother had much respect for Jackson or the people who placed their faith in him.[66]

With the new year came a renewed hope that Crawford could win the election. As Adams gained momentum the potential for a deadlocked House grew more likely. If that were to happen, Mangum wrote an ally in Wake County, Crawford would emerge as the compromise choice. Still, he cautioned, Clay's refusal to make clear his intentions left the outcome as uncertain as ever.[67] Mangum also confessed his perplexity to Duncan Cameron. Few if any officials, he stated, know what will happen next. "Clay certainly holds in his hands the vote[s] of 5 states," he wrote Cameron, suspecting that the Speaker would turn them over to Adams. These intrigues bothered Mangum, who complained,

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[65] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 1:160-161.

[66] Ibid., 1:164.

[67] Ibid., 1:169-70.

"our notions of patriotism become quite low, when we see gentlemen occupying so much space in the public mind as Mr. Clay regulated by no higher considerations." Equally troubling to Mangum was the thought that powerful, calculating men, cloistered from the rest of society, would decide who led "the purest government that ever existed on the face of the earth."[68] Yet for all his misgivings, Mangum continued to promote the candidacy of the man who finished third in the popular election.

On February 3 and 7, 1824, Mangum delivered his first major address before the House of Representatives. In it he outlined the reasons why the House should ignore the will of the people and elect Crawford. He began by saying that the framers of the Constitution did not intend for the House vote to be a mere reflection of the popular vote. If such were the case, he asked rhetorically, why then should the House have any say in the matter at all? Positing several hypothetical examples, he went on to prove that members of the House must, on occasion, vote their own principles even when they ran counter to those of the people who elected them. The practical considerations of choosing one candidate from among the three weighed as heavily on Mangum's mind as did the question of his moral duty. What if, he posed, each of the three men received the same number of votes and the balloting ended with a tie? If bound by sacred principle, as some of his colleagues had insisted, then the members could not change their votes and the House would never be able to elect a president. The people had had their opportunity to act as a "primary assembly," he argued, when they cast their ballots in November. They

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[68] Ibid., 1:173-74.

failed to reach a decision, so it had fallen upon the House to act. "Sir, a majority of the people have distinctly told you that not even their favorite candidate is the man of their wishes, [therefore] it is we who must elect."[69]

What should dictate their course, Mangum wondered? "Is it to obey the voice of our states? Or is it to obey the voice of our districts? It is in my judgement neither more nor less than this - To do what is right, according to the best dictates of our own understandings, and leave the consequences to God, and to our country."[70] The right thing to do, in Mangum's opinion, was to vote for the most able of the three men, in this case William Crawford. Citing The Federalist Papers, Mangum argued that elected officials need not always heed the demands of their constituency. In a skillful display of legerdemain, the strict constructionist now suggested that representatives ought, from time to time, oblige the "philosophy" of the constitution rather than the letter of the law. He insisted that the framers had created a representative, not a plebiscitary democracy, and in such a government officials had to be trusted to act honorably. Only then, Mangum said, could they return to their districts knowing that they had done what was best for their fellow citizens, even if those same people disagreed with their actions. To be sure, Mangum advocated a limited form of democracy, one that endured popular participation to a point. After that, a civic-minded elite had to be given the reigns of power. He

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[69] Mangum's two day speech can be found in, U.S. Congress, Register of Debates in Congress, 18th Cong., 2nd. sess., pp. 455-61, 491-93; This speech has been reprinted in, Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 5:487-500; for quote see, ibid., 5:494.

[70] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 5:494.

condemned populists as "flatterers" who twisted in the wind of public opinion. "I would not look to the shouts of the multitude for the opinions of the people," he remarked, implying that the men gathered in the chamber with him were in fact, according to the framers of the constitution, "the people."[71]

Mangum's conviction that he embodied the collective will of his district was reinforced by fellow Tar Heels who regarded him as their eyes and ears in Washington. "We are looking to you for light & knowledge," William Ruffin wrote shortly before the House made its final determination.[72] Unfortunately, Mangum could say little that would please his friends. Three days before the vote he informed his wife that all was lost. "Mr. Crawford will be beaten," he wrote, predicting, "Mr. Adams I have no doubt will be elected."[73] He was correct. On February 9, 1825, the House selected John Quincy Adams on the first ballot. As expected, North Carolina cast its vote for Crawford. Mangum and nine other members of the state delegation chose the Secretary, while two selected Jackson and one picked Adams.[74] Back in North Carolina the delegation faced criticism from the pro-Jackson press. Philo White, editor of the Salisbury Western Carolinian, condemned "our members of Congress [who] voted for Crawford in contempt of their constituents."[75]

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[71] Ibid., 5:495-500.

[72] Ibid., 1:185.

[73] Ibid., 1:187.

[74] Newsome, The Presidential Election of 1824, pp. 170; Hopkins, "Election of 1824," 1:380.

[75] Western Carolinian (Salisbury), 1 March 1825.

Having already decided to seek reelection, Mangum would now have to test the lofty principles he had expressed on the floor of the House in the arena of public opinion.

The loss exacerbated Mangum's already acute frustration with national affairs. In January he commented on what he saw as the inability of Congress to do anything meaningful. "Congress has not done much yet, nor do I think that much important legislation will be done this winter." Happily, he could report a reduction in the national debt and an increase in the size of "the gallant little navy." A ceaseless campaigner, he was quick to attribute the fiscal good fortune to the deft leadership of the Secretary of the Treasury, William Crawford.[76] Public business, however, was no longer his foremost concern. When Mangum learned that his daughter Sallie was seriously ill, he began to think that he would never see her again and that his wife would exhaust herself trying to care for the child. Compounding his distress, the inhospitable climate in the nation's capital had once again taken its toll on Mangum's health. Fatigued by illness and concern for Sallie, he began to prepare for his departure. Shortly after the February election he started off on his long-awaited journey homeward.[77]

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[76] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, I:170-71.

[77] Ibid., I:186-87, 191-92.

CHAPTER 4
RELUCTANT JACKSONIAN

As the first congressional session of the John Quincy Adams administration drew to a close, Willie Mangum was discouraged. "The Administration [is] both weak & wicked," he reported to his wife Charity. "The present prospect is that the members of the Congress from the south of Washington will unite to put down Adams, & if they can get no better, they will take up Gen. Jackson for that purpose."[1] Unknowingly, Mangum had expressed the sentiments of a generation of southerners who would later form the core of the Whig Party in that region. William Crawford's defeat in 1824 had left politicians like Mangum rudderless. Seething over the so-called "corrupt bargain" between Adams and Henry Clay and alienated by their nationalist policies, opponents turned, reluctantly, to Andrew Jackson as the lesser of two evils. The fragile alliances of the mid-1820s were based on personalities, and unless they identified themselves with one of the major presidential contenders, Mangum and other like-minded southerners had no chance of electoral success. A marriage of convenience, the union proved tumultuous and short-lived. It did, however, provide political leaders with an easy frame of reference and rallying point that carried them through a period of transition. Before long, new parties

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[1] Henry Thomas Shanks, ed., The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 5 vols. (Raleigh: State Department of Archives and History, 1950-1956), 1:268.

founded on issues and employing modern organizational techniques replaced factions rooted in personalities. Until then, Jackson would serve a useful purpose.[2]

After guiding his state delegation into the Crawford fold in the February 1825 House election, a weary Mangum returned to Red Mountain. Shortly thereafter, his daughter Sallie recovered her health, allowing her father to focus his full attention on professional matters. Even before leaving the capital Mangum had arranged to revive his legal practice and did so that summer. Plantation business also monopolized much of his time. His primary concern, however, was his plan for reelection to the House. As early as January 7, 1825, Mangum's friend and advisor Seth Jones had narrowed the list of Mangum's possible opponents to a single name, Josiah Crudup. Jones assured the incumbent that he need not worry, that he could beat anyone in the district. Mangum knew better. Crudup, a Baptist minister and former congressman, would be a worthy challenger. Recalling the race years later, Mangum described it as the most exciting of his long career.[3]

In contrast to Jones' upbeat analysis, Mangum's former tutor John Chavis offered the congressman a more realistic appraisal. On January 28, 1825, he warned Mangum that

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[2] Charles Grier Sellers, Jr., "Jackson Men with Feet of Clay," American Historical Review 62 (1957), p. 551; Richard P. McCormick, The Presidential Game: The Origin of American Presidential Politics (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), 121-22, 126; Ronald P. Formisano, The Transformation of Political Culture: Massachusetts Parties, 1790s-1840s (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), p. 17; Thomas E. Jeffrey, State Parties and National Politics: North Carolina, 1815-1861 (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1989), p. 33.

[3] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 1:171-72, 187-88; 5:434.

his continued support for William Crawford could cost him votes, especially in Wake County, where both Andrew Jackson and Josiah Crudup enjoyed substantial support.[4] Chavis spoke with authority, sensing, as he did, the groundswell of popular sentiment against Andrew Jackson's congressional opponents in the February election. Nevertheless, Mangum refused to reject Crawford. He understood, of course, that while rank and file North Carolinians were infatuated with the General, important elements among the elite remained wary. As a result, Mangum could expect the support of some influential backers. In March 1825, the Raleigh Register praised Mangum as a loyal public servant and, in effect, endorsed him for a second term. One of the state's leading newspapers, the Register noted that Mangum had served the state "both honorably, and advantageously." The editor appreciated his effort to secure postal routes and other scraps of patronage, and applauded his renunciation of protective tariffs as keeping with the states rights traditions of North Carolina. During his first term in Congress, Mangum had ingratiated himself to the local press. Always ready to send bits of news from Washington, he used his position as an unofficial correspondent to keep his name before the public. Frequent visits to Raleigh, often timed to coincide with the beginning of each legislative session, won Mangum warm adherents in the state government as well.[5]

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[4] Ibid., 1:184.

[5] Raleigh Register, 25 March 1825; Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 1:202; Penelope McDuffie, "Chapters in the Life of Willie Person Mangum," The Historical Papers, Published by the Trinity College Historical Society (Durham: Duke University Press, 1925), p. 29; William S. Hoffman, Andrew Jackson and North Carolina Politics (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1958), p. 14.

As with his first campaign for Congress, the 1825 contest found both candidates answering accusations of misconduct and chicanery. The two contestants, according to one circular, had agreed to "publish nothing to effect each other's election, directly or indirectly" and to cease making separate campaign appearances.[6] When one pro-Mangum partisan, writing in the Raleigh Register under the pseudonym "Timoleon," attacked Crudup, the preacher's friends responded in kind.[7] Echoing the rhetoric and actions of two years before, both politicians professed republican principles while engaging in unrepublican behavior. Unlike the previous contest, however, each candidate maintained a high degree of respect and admiration for the other. Crudup's oratorical skills equalled those of Mangum. Witnesses reported seeing tears well in the eyes of each man as he made emotional appeals to the multitudes who often found it impossible to restrain their own emotions. Crudup had the added advantage of preaching political sermons to his congregation every Sunday.

So charismatic was his opponent that Mangum began to doubt his own chances of winning the election. According to Mangum family lore, a heavy rain that fell the weekend prior to the election saved the incumbent from defeat. The torrent had so severely flooded one stream that Crudup found himself stranded on the bank opposite the site of their final debate. Rightly or wrongly, Mangum attributed his victory in 1825 to

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[6] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 1:193-95.

[7] Raleigh Register, 5 August 1825.

the fact that Crudup had missed this final encounter.[8] Whatever the reason, Mangum did win, defeating Crudup by a mere 56 votes. He took a more substantial majority in Orange County, capturing 1553 votes to Crudup's 716. Wake County, where Andrew Jackson enjoyed a large following, gave most of its votes to Crudup. The narrow margin attests to both the appeal of his opponent and the continued resentment that the voters of North Carolina held out for all those who chose to back Crawford in the House election: Of the ten who did, only five won reelection.[9]

An unusually long and arduous stagecoach ride brought Mangum back to Washington, D.C. to begin his second term in Congress. Outwardly, the city appeared much as it did the day he left. Behind the veneer, however, lay a new political order that began taking shape shortly after John Quincy Adams had been elected President. When Adams announced that Henry Clay would serve as his Secretary of State, many supporters of Jackson, Crawford, and John C. Calhoun cried foul. Early in 1825, before the House of Representatives had chosen the new president, Adams and Clay, opponents charged, had entered into a "corrupt bargain." According to the terms of their phantom contract, Clay delivered his supporters to Adams in exchange for the first office in the cabinet. Traditionally, the office of Secretary of State had been considered a stepping stone to the

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[8] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 5:434-35, 753; Raleigh Star, 21 June 1811.

[9] Mangum also won a majority of the votes in Person County; Raleigh Register, 19 August 1825; Western Carolinian (Salisbury), 23 August 1825; Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 1:195, 204-205; Albert R. Newsome, The Presidential Election of 1824 in North Carolina (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1939), p. 172.

Presidency, so, in the words of their detractors, the two had conspired to pass down the first office to Clay once Adams had finished his tenure. The charges were never proved, but the "corrupt bargain" served as an effective rallying call for a new opposition coalition. The various elements slowly coalesced, first at the state level and then in Washington. With Jackson in Tennessee, the new Vice President, John C. Calhoun, took the lead of the pro-Jackson contingent in the capital. Having suffered a stroke, William Crawford could not prevent Martin Van Buren of New York from rising to the top of that faction. In time the New Yorker, together with Thomas Ritchie's Richmond Junto, would join the ranks of the Jacksonians. Willie Mangum and the other Crawford leaders in North Carolina delayed their decision until certain of which group would emerge as the most potent threat to the Adams administration.[10]

On December 6, 1825, the day after Mangum had settled into his rooms in the capital, John Quincy Adams delivered his First Annual Message to Congress. In it he outlined his agenda and defined the debate for the coming session. Adams advanced proposals for internal improvement projects, a protective tariff, the establishment of a national university and an "astronomical observatory," the distribution of the federal surplus to the individual states, and a stable currency regulated by a healthy, centralized

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[10] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 1:209, 231, 237; Ralph Ketcham, Presidents Above Party: The First American Presidency (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1984), p. 137; Robert V. Remini, "Election of 1828," in Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., Fred L. Israel, and William P. Hansen, eds., History of American Presidential Elections: 1789-1968, 4 vols. (New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1971), 1:415-17; Hoffman, Andrew Jackson and North Carolina Politics, p. 12; James S. Chase, Emergence of the Presidential Nominating Convention, 1789-1832 (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1973), pp. 103-104.

banking system.[11] In the opinion of strict constructionists like Mangum, these policies exceeded the bounds of constitutional authority. A disciple of parsimonious government, Mangum complained that they were also too expensive. Adams' speech solidified the opposition, drawing in states rights elements from the pro-Crawford camp. Proponents of Henry Clay's "American System," an activist political program similar to that advanced by Adams, gravitated into the Adams-Clay camp. Former rank-and-file Federalists generally approved of the speech; the leadership of the old party, for the most part, did not. In general, southerners objected to an expansion of federal authority as implied in the speech. Although not quite ready to commit to Jackson, Mangum did express his dissatisfaction with the proposals. "The administration opens upon principles I cannot approve," he confided to his wife, careful to qualify his disapproval by adding, "what may be the future direction I cannot tell."[12]

Political differences with the new administration did not keep Mangum from attending White House functions. In mid-December he enjoyed a "splendid levee" at the presidential mansion, dining with Adams, whom he jokingly referred to as "John II."[13]

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[11] James D. Richardson, ed., A Compilation of the Messages and Papers of the Presidents, 1789-1902 11 vols. (New York: Bureau of National Literature and Art, 1903-1907), 2:299-317.

[12] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 1:211; Remini, "Election of 1828," 1:415; James H. Broussard, The Southern Federalists, 1800-1816 (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1978), p. 193; Michael F. Holt, Political Parties and American Development: from the Age of Jackson to the Age of Lincoln (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1992), p. 257.

[13] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 1:234.

Giving equal attention to the opposition, he attended a dinner party at the home of Vice President Calhoun. As the guests were leaving, Calhoun pulled Mangum aside and said, "Mangum - Mangum do - do Sir call & see me frequently & spend your evenings with us - without ceremony - Come Sir, we shall always be glad to see you." The young congressman recognized these transparent entreaties as part and parcel of Calhoun's back-slapping political style, one that he would later adopt himself. "Ah Sir! He knows a thing or two," Mangum wrote admiringly of the Vice President, "It is in this way he sweeps the young fellows."[14] Mangum had come to appreciate the value of informal contacts. Whether eating dinner at the home of Joseph Gales, the powerful editor of the National Intelligencer, a foreign dignitary, or sharing a mess with Senator Nathaniel Macon and other leading North Carolina politicians, Mangum was becoming a professional in the craft of informal politics.[15]

Dinner with President Adams did not allay Mangum's suspicion that the administration was founded on corruption. He had begun the session with an open mind, waiting to see how Adams would conduct himself before committing himself to either of the major factions. As tensions rose, Mangum sifted through the rhetoric to figure out what was fact and what was fiction. For example, he could easily have dismissed the so-called "corrupt bargain" as nothing more than partisan rancor, for he had had prior knowledge of the negotiations that landed Clay the cabinet post and saw nothing wrong

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[14] Ibid.

[15] Ibid., 1:209, 234-36.

with them at the time. In February 1825, shortly after Adams had won the House election, Clay spoke with several of Crawford's friends, including Mangum, and asked if they had any objections to him joining the new cabinet. On the contrary, Clay wrote, Mangum and the others "expressed to me their strong convictions that I ought to accept."[16] Clay had always impressed Mangum, who presumably felt that the Speaker would serve the nation honorably in whatever position he occupied. Mangum soon changed his mind.[17]

Each encounter with the administration brought Mangum closer to the Jacksonians. He confided to his friends that he had grown distrustful of the President and his first officer. The tone of Adams' December 6 address to Congress verified Mangum's belief that states-rights principles would suffer at the hands of the new President. After a pleasant affair at the White House, he observed that Adams was "quite republican in his manners," but could not help but feel that the President had something to hide.[18] By January 15, 1826, any hope Mangum may have had for an alliance with Adams and Clay had vanished. He told Bartlett Yancey that "this administration, I verily believe, will be conducted upon as corrupt principles, indeed more corrupt, than any that has preceded it."[19] Having now rejected Adams, Mangum appropriated what he knew to be the inaccurate harangues of the President's enemies. Adams' penchant for dishonest behavior,

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[16] James F. Hopkins, et al., eds., The Papers of Henry Clay 9 vols. (Lexington: The University of Kentucky Press, 1959-1988), 4:73-74.

[17] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 1:231.

[18] Ibid., 1:234.

[19] Ibid., 1:231.

Mangum reasoned, could be attributed to his regional heritage. "I felt so indignant at the miserably corrupted policy as I believed it of a yankee nation."[20] Exactly how these negative traits found their way into the soul of western-born Henry Clay, Mangum did not say. He did state that the most grievous actions of the administration probably originated with the Secretary of State. Baseless reports that Adams planned to back an amendment that would rescind the three-fifths clause of the constitution in order to reduce the power of the southern states did not surprise Mangum. An overly ambitious Henry Clay, he suspected, was at the bottom of this divisive scheme. Although uncertain about Jackson's political viability, Mangum felt that southerners were unwelcome in the Adams camp and therefore had nowhere else to turn.[21]

The distribution of patronage also played a vital role in shaping the alliances of the mid-1820s. In December, Yancey instructed Mangum to arrange a meeting between himself and Clay to find out if "[Clay] & his friend [Adams] are really serious when they say they wish to do something for our state."[22] In fact, Adams had hoped to build a constituency in the South by placing North Carolina's William Gaston at the head of the War Department. The intercession of Clay, who had another person in mind for the job, prevented Gaston's appointment. By passing over Gaston, Adams and Clay made a serious blunder. Not only had they alienated a powerful force in North Carolina politics, but they

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[20] Ibid.

[21] Ibid., 1:233-34; Hoffman, Andrew Jackson and North Carolina Politics, p. 10.

[22] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 1:214.

enabled politicians like Mangum to use the patronage issue against the President.[23] Speaking out against an administration-backed bill that would have increased the size of the federal judiciary, Mangum took a swipe at Adams and his use of the patronage. "Another administration [has] raised up a new set of judges [in order] that patronage might sprinkle its delicious mania on the west," he howled on the floor of the House.[24] Not to be outdone by his adversaries, however, Mangum labored long and hard to establish mail routes in his state, secure diplomatic posts for his friends, and place young Tar Heels in West Point.[25]

Daniel Webster's proposed Judiciary Bill provided the forum for Mangum's second major address in Congress. On January 10, 1826, he denounced the measure, which provided for one additional Justice and three more judicial circuits, in terms that reflected his conservative states rights philosophy. In so doing he edged even closer to the Jacksonians. Both pragmatism and principle dictated that Mangum oppose the measure. Besides furnishing the President with more patronage, the Bill, which ultimately failed, would have expanded the power of the federal government at the expense of the states. Mangum based his opposition on his theory that the federal government would not stop accruing power until it had consumed all those reserved for the states. Congress must act

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[23] Hoffman, Andrew Jackson and North Carolina Politics, pp. 10, 14.

[24] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 5:517.

[25] Ibid., 1:205-206, 212, 223, 283-84, 296.

"calmly" and "gradually," if at all. "Where shall we stop," he asked his colleagues, convinced that they needed to stop with the Webster Bill.[26]

Mangum openly identified himself as a member of the opposition with his speech against the Judiciary Bill. "I gave the administration a rap on the knuckles," he boasted to his wife, "and as I was the first member of the Congress that had done it, it seemed for a moment to open a beehive over my head - but none of them have yet stung me."[27] And none would. Mangum had so neatly encapsulated the fears of his constituents that none of his opponents in North Carolina dared touch him. His speech had phrased the debate in the language of republicanism and states rights. A President willing to abuse his authority, a central government poised to take power from the states -- North Carolinians saw such actions as threats to their liberties.[28] Priestly Mangum informed his brother that his speech had been warmly received back home. "Even your most dangerous and bitter enemies are compelled either, to say nothing about it, or to speak in respectful terms of it." As for the "rap on the knuckles," Priestly proposed a more severe punishment for Adams and his friends. Of one Ohio Representative he wrote, "I felt as if a cane could

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[26] Ibid., 5:509, 516; The speech can be found in, United States Congress, Register of Debates in Congress, 19th Cong., 1 Sess., pp. 931-44; The speech has been reprinted in, Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 5:500-519.

[27] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 1:229.

[28] Robert V. Remini, Henry Clay: Statesman for the Union (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1991), p. 287.

have measured the capacity of his scull [sic]." "I can't help thinking," he added, "that the cudgel is an excellent argument sometimes."[29]

Mangum's rejection of Adams left him yearning for a patron and a leader. Between January and April 1826, the top Crawford men in North Carolina narrowed their search for a suitable alternative. The primary consideration for men like Macon and Yancey was bridging the gap between North and South. The candidate had to have national appeal in order for their faction to succeed. In January, Yancey and Macon thought DeWitt Clinton of New York would fit their needs. Mangum advised his seniors that Clinton would have a hard time building a constituency in the South, and so the two renewed their efforts. President Adams, Mangum believed, would easily win reelection unless the opposition united behind a single candidate. For that reason he finally threw his support behind Jackson. In April 1826, he made his intentions public. Like many in the South, he was a reluctant convert. Jackson's flirtation with nationalism worried states rights men. His egalitarianism troubled conservatives who hoped to keep a tight rein on an unpredictable public. But he was immensely popular with the voters in North Carolina, a ready-made constituency the leaders could not ignore. Finally, Jackson was a slaveowner, and as such could be counted on to protect the interests of Southern planters.[30]

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[29] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 1:262.

[30] Ibid., 1:233, 268; Hoffman, Andrew Jackson and North Carolina Politics, p. 12; Arthur C. Cole, The Whig Party in the South (Washington, D.C.: American Historical Association, 1913), pp. 9-10; Chase, Emergence of the Presidential Nominating Convention, p. 100; Max R. Williams, "The Foundations of the Whig Party in North Carolina: A Synthesis and a Modest Proposal," North Carolina Historical Review 47 (1970), p. 117.

The new pro-Jackson faction in Congress tested its cohesion by frustrating Adams' plan to send an American delegation to an international conference in Panama. Southern politicians objected that blacks and mulattoes would be sent from the Latin countries forcing the American delegates to acknowledge their social equality at the sessions. Mangum played a minor role in the debate and joined with all but two of the North Carolina delegation in opposing the initiative. Friends in North Carolina assured Mangum that the people there appreciated his efforts.[31] Having come out in favor of Jackson, Mangum, who had long enjoyed the support of the political elite, now had the backing of most of the voters in his state. He could sense their rising expectations and, perhaps in an effort to avert disappointment, confessed to having little influence with the powers that be. In truth, he continued to develop a network of personal contacts that provided him access to the most powerful officials in Washington. A seemingly endless string of parties, card games, and other social events enabled Mangum to extend his circle of associates to newspaper publishers, their wives, and anyone else who graced the dance floor or tried their luck at whist. Despite protestations to his wife, he could be found most nights relaxing in the company of the high and mighty. Such an exhausting schedule could explain why he often found himself bothered by minor ailments. By April, he had begun to exhibit his characteristic restlessness. He had so tired of life in the capital that he promised his wife he would vote to end the session at the earliest possible date. That he

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[31] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 1:244, 258, 274, 289; Hoffman, Andrew Jackson and North Carolina Politics, p. 10; Edith Josephine Houston, "The Bank of the United States and Willie P. Mangum," (M.A. thesis, Appalachian State Teachers College, 1960), p. 23.

did. Late in May 1826, congress adjourned and Mangum went home for some much needed rest.[32]

The partisan intrigues of the last session had left Mangum both physically and emotionally exhausted. Fed up with events and the people who drove them, he expressed his discontent to his wife, writing, "everything here goes against my judgement."[33] A bloodless duel between Henry Clay and John Randolph only added to the circus-like atmosphere. Once he returned to Red Mountain, Mangum removed himself from public affairs. Meanwhile, the musters in and around Raleigh and Hillsborough went on without him. His allies felt slighted by Mangum's continued absence. Long-time confidant and friend Seth Jones chided him for staying away so long, but his words fell on deaf ears. Unbeknownst to Jones, Mangum had made other career plans. On August 14, 1826, Mangum let it be known that he wished to return to the bench and submitted a formal entreaty to that effect. His straightforward request seemed to be a breach of professional etiquette. Mangum later claimed that what he did was entirely above board and that his rivals had acted in the same way. His aggressiveness did not seem to offend the state Executive Council. It moved quickly, voting on the first ballot to recommend to Governor Hutchins G. Burton that Mangum fill the position vacated by retiring Judge Frederick

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[32] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 1:267, 268, 274, 277.

[33] Ibid., 1:268.

Nash. Burton, a friend of Mangum, gladly accepted their "advice and consent," and on August 18, 1826 appointed him to the Superior Court of Law and Equity.[34]

The appointment sparked a controversy. Mangum had accepted the post before resigning his seat in the House, leaving many in the state capital to wonder if he was simply killing time before the next session of Congress. They may have been correct. The power to elect judges rested with the General Assembly, which at the time of Nash's retirement was in recess. Under state law, the Governor could name a temporary replacement. Once the legislature reconvened it would then elect a permanent successor to the outgoing judge. Although the press assumed that Mangum had resigned his seat in Congress the moment he accepted the appointment, he had in fact held back his decision until he could confer with his brother Priestly. What Mangum had hoped to learn remains unclear, perhaps he wanted to get an idea of how the Assembly would vote in December. Whatever his reasons, Mangum stalled until his brother could survey local opinion and report back to him. On September 1, 1826, Priestly passed along his findings. If the older Mangum entertained any hope of winning the vote in the General Assembly, Priestly wrote, then he ought to resign his seat in the House at once.[35] Still Mangum delayed, hinting to his brother that he would eventually step down. One week later Priestly

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[34] Ibid., 1:274-75, 290, 297-98, 302-03; John L. Cheney, Jr., ed., North Carolina Government, 1585-1974: A Narrative and Statistical History (Raleigh: North Carolina Department of the Secretary of State, 1975), pp. 361, 370; Raleigh Star, 25 August 1826.

[35] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 1:299; Raleigh Star, 25 August, 22 December 1826; Daniel M. McFarland, "Rip Van Winkle: Political Evolution in North Carolina, 1815-1835," (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1954), pp. 212-13.

delivered a second, more urgent admonition. He let his brother know that both his friends and enemies had begun to question his motives. Leaders in Raleigh, he warned, were "intimating that you did not intend to resign at all, & that love of power or of gain, or both, would be the cause."[36] Mangum finally took his brother's advice and resigned from Congress, but the damage had already been done. He now found himself defending his name and reputation to men who had once trusted him without reservation.[37]

With his fate in the hands of a hostile legislature, Mangum left for Raleigh to assume his judicial duties. On October 2, 1826, the Superior Court for Wake County began its Fall term. Judge Mangum faced a varied docket of criminal cases, which he met with dispatch. Freeman Goode, a free African-American accused of murdering a slave, stood before Mangum that first week. After listening to all the arguments, he ruled that Goode had acted in self-defense and set him free. Another "free man of color," Frederick Matthews, was less fortunate. The Judge upheld the states's contention that Matthews had committed assault with intent to kill and sentenced him to three months in prison plus two days in the public stocks. For one convicted thief Mangum prescribed twenty-five lashes across the back and imprisonment until the defendant paid the cost of his own prosecution. After settling at least two more cases, Mangum set off for the next court in Franklin County. On the way he stopped for a visit at the home of his brother Priestly. There he became so sick that he had to discontinue his journey. As Mangum recuperated, the

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[36] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 1:300.

[37] Raleigh Register, 22 September 1826.

newspapers reassured the public that he would soon be able to return to the bench.[38] One loyal supporter welcomed the news, writing, "the southern states . . . would loose [sic] one of their brightest . . . when they loose [sic] Willie P. Mangum." The Judge probably would have liked to see more such men in the legislature as it convened in December to decide his future.[39]

After completing some routine administrative matters, the General Assembly took up the business of filling the two judicial vacancies that had come up since their last meeting. The death of Judge John Paxton earlier that month had created the second opening. Mangum guessed that Paxton's death would work against his own candidacy. The fact that two posts needed to be filled meant that two regional factions could now unite to oppose him. As the election approached, the new anti-Mangum coalition stepped up its attack. They continued to criticize him for the lapse of time between his appointment to the judgeship and his resignation from Congress. In addition, they argued that his departure from the bench in 1820 attested to his unreliability. Mangum felt compelled to answer the charges brought against him, despite his own suspicions that his chances for election had been hopelessly compromised. Writing to Bartlett Yancey, he openly acknowledged for the first time the financial distress that had led him to step down from

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[38] Raleigh Star, 6, 13, 20 October 1826; Raleigh Register, 6 October 1826.

[39] Unknown to Wood James Hamlin, 14 October 1826, Wood James Hamlin Papers, North Carolina Department of Archives and History, Raleigh, North Carolina.

the bench in 1820. Apparently, he was ready to risk public humiliation in order to hold his seat.[40]

When the Assembly voted in early January 1827, Mangum found himself facing a well-coordinated opposition. On the first ballot members of the eastern wing succeeded in electing Robert Strange of Fayetteville. Mangum finished a strong second but failed to win enough votes to take the second spot. The next ballot again found Mangum in second place, but this time his leading rival had been unable to win the majority needed to take the remaining post. On the third and final ballot the opposition united behind James Martin of Rowen County and defeated Mangum. As he predicted, elements from both the east and west had joined together to thwart his election. The contest illustrates the enduring strength of regional factions in the state. In time they would be replaced by state-wide political parties founded on national issues. Men who had voted both for and against Mangum that day would later work with him. For now, however, he would have to bide his time as a private citizen.[41]

Removal from the bench not only humiliated Mangum, it also denied him a much needed source of income. The money generated by the immediate resumption of his legal practice did not stave off creditors. Financial problems that first appeared in 1820 reached a crisis in 1827 and 1828. At first, he turned to his father-in-law, William Cain, Sr., for

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[40] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 1:299, 302-305; Raleigh Star, 22 December 1826.

[41] Raleigh Register, 12 January 1827; McFarland, "Rip Van Winkle," p. 213; Raleigh Star, 5 January 1827.

help. Cain endorsed notes in excess of $1,700, but still Mangum languished in debt. His troubles began when he assumed responsibility for his father's obligations. They were compounded by imprudent land deals, his generous lending practices, and a taste for expensive things. To maintain his reputation as a southern gentleman, Mangum adorned himself with costly apparel and stocked his household with only the finest furniture. Ironically, his reckless ways almost forced him to give up the style of living he so coveted. Late in 1827 he gave serious thought to leaving his country estate to settle in Hillsborough, where he thought he could make more money as a lawyer. Ultimately, he resisted the temptation to try his luck elsewhere.[42]

In April 1828, Mangum turned over control of his estate to a pair of executors. Doctor James Webb of Hillsborough and Thomas D. Watts, who served as both the sheriff of Orange County and the town treasurer of Hillsborough, labored for more than a year to put Mangum's finances in order. For the cost of one dollar, the two assumed most of Mangum's assets and all of his liabilities. The terms of the indenture left Mangum the house in which he and his family lived and little else. He empowered the two executors to sell off any part of his 1,600 acre plantation and all of his other real estate holdings to help satisfy the banks and private individuals to whom he owed money. Mangum surrendered control of at least sixteen of his slaves, most of his livestock, a variety of farming tools and tack, kitchen utensils, a portion of the previous year's crops, and some of his household furniture, to help Webb and Watts consolidate his debts and begin paying

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[42] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 1:xxiii-xxiv, 155, 184, 199, 307, 308, 313, 317-18, 320.

them off. The process was slow and painful. Before it was over, Mangum had sold close to $3,400 worth of slaves and liquidated his unattached real estate holdings. He kept his house and the surrounding 1,600 acre plantation.[43]

Mangum's insolvency did not seem to jeopardize his political future. His friends in Raleigh worked throughout the Spring and Summer of 1828 to get their man back in office. On May 24, 1828, Thomas Jefferson Green, one of Mangum's most valued allies in the statehouse, hinted that Nathaniel Macon was about to retire and that Mangum should think about making a run for the Senate. Resisting temptation, Mangum felt he had to bow to one of his seniors and declined an invitation that his name to be put forward in the General Assembly. Another ally told Mangum that he had been mentioned as a possible appointee to fill the unoccupied post of Attorney General. Neither Willie nor his brother Priestly, who had actively lobbied for the job, was appointed. Both, however, assumed active roles during the presidential election campaign of 1828. Priestly served on the Central Jackson Committee of Vigilance and Correspondence, while his older brother ran as an elector on the Jackson slate.[44]

The election of 1828 lacked the drama that had distinguished the campaign four years earlier. In this contest, only two candidates vied for North Carolina's fifteen electoral votes, and only one, Andrew Jackson, had a strong following. The other,

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[43] Ibid., 1:325-29, 330-31, 332-336, 337-338.

[44] Ibid., 1:331, 340-41, 343-46, 372; Stephen B. Weeks, "Willie Person Mangum," in Biographical History of North Carolina: From Colonial Times to the Present, Samuel A. Ashe, ed., 8 vols. (Greensboro: Charles L. Van Noppen, 1905-1917), 5:242; McFarland, "Rip Van Winkle," pp. 233-34; Raleigh Register, 5 December 1828.

incumbent President John Quincy Adams, failed to create a base of support in the state, in part because his administration slighted some of the state's most influential politicians with his uneven distribution of patronage. In North Carolina, indeed throughout the country, the Jacksonians were better financed, better organized, and had better leaders. Adams did have an impressive array of talented journalists backing him, but so too did Jackson. The Tennessean also had an aggressive corps of campaign managers who mobilized the recently-expanded electorate and established a network of state-level committees and local of "Hickory Clubs." His organization had yet to take on all of the attributes of a modern political party, but compared to that of his rival, Jackson's machine was a model of efficiency. Unlike Jackson, who took an active part in the daily conduct of his campaign, Adams proved an uncooperative candidate. Preferring to leave the unseemly business of politics to his underlings, he did little to help his reelection.[45]

Historian Robert Remini has described the presidential contest of 1828 as "probably the dirtiest, coarsest, most vulgar election in American history."[46] There seemed to be no limit to the abuse each side was willing to heap upon the other, hardly surprising, considering the nature of the political alliances of the day. Both the Jacksonians and the National Republicans, the party of Adams and Clay, based their coalitions on the personal qualities of their standard bearers. Each had scrupulously avoided taking stands on the major issues, fearing the backlash such action might entail. As a result, the candidates

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[45] Remini, "Election of 1828," 1:418-24, 432-33.

[46] Ibid., 1:426.

were the issues; their characters, or lack thereof, became grist for the political mill. The Adams camp leveled a series of scurrilous attacks against both Jackson and his family, charging him with everything from treason to murder to blasphemy. Elizabeth Hutchinson Jackson, the candidate's mother, was alleged to have been a prostitute and, according to her detractors, had either married a mulatto or was one herself. The opposition circulated rumors that his wife, Rachel Donalson Robards Jackson, was an adulteress and bigamist, flagrant misrepresentations of the truth. Adams was not immune to such assaults. Jacksonians repeated their cries of "corrupt bargain." Not content with that, they recast the incumbent as an aristocrat, living in opulence and out of touch with the common folk. The partisan press took to calling Adams "King John the Second," maligning him as a monarchist who had been corrupted by his years of service as a diplomat in Europe.[47]

For voters of North Carolina, the Jackson-Calhoun ticket, which continued under the banner "the People's Party," best represented their own values. Although they would have been hard pressed to find a reference to states rights ideology in Jackson's public statements, leaders could extrapolate from them a defense of Jeffersonian agrarianism, and from that, a defense of states rights. This proved an acceptable substitute. The General's reputation as a war hero and frontiersman only added to his notoriety in this largely rural state. Another factor working in the General's favor was his southern heritage. While Adams, a New England-born aristocrat, could not be expected to speak for southern interests, Jackson could. At least that is what many Tar Heels believed. The Tennessean

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[47] Glyndon G. Van Deusen, The Jacksonian Era: 1828-1848 (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1959), pp. 26-27; Remini, "Election of 1828," 1:418, 426-29.

looked unbeatable in North Carolina. Fissures in his coalition, however, revealed the instability of factional politics. The West, which had four years earlier been the locus of Jackson's support in the state, showed signs of discontent with the General. Conversely, the East, once the center of the pro-Crawford forces, had taken up Jackson with great enthusiasm. The emerging market economy also helped shape political identity. Conservative elements in the state, voters wary of protective tariffs, elitist government, and an invasive market economy, took comfort in the agrarian rhetoric of the Democrats. Cash-crop producing planters, city dwellers, and merchants fell in with Adams, whose programs appealed to such market-oriented groups. Demographic conditions in North Carolina gave the advantage to the former. Populated primarily by yeoman farmers and boasting a mere handful of urban centers, the Old North State had all the earmarks of a Jacksonian stronghold. The outcome of the November balloting showed this to be true.[48]

In November 1828, Jackson trounced Adams in the nationwide contest. He took every state south of the Potomac River, including North Carolina, where he won in a landslide. In the popular vote there, Jackson captured 37,875 votes to Adams' 13,918, meaning that more than 75 percent of the voters had cast their ballots for the General. Voter turnout jumped by more than 43.3 percentage points over the previous election. In Orange County, Jackson's good fortune continued. Mangum and the other thirteen

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[48] Remini, "Election of 1828," 1:418, 436; McFarland, "Rip Van Winkle," p. 242; Henry M. Wagstaff, State Rights and Political Parties in North Carolina, 1776-1861, (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1906), pp. 48, 64; Harry L. Watson, Jacksonian Politics and Community Conflict: The Emergence of the Second Party System in Cumberland County North Carolina (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1981), p. 149.

Jackson electors took in 1,057 votes each. Their opponents managed only 440 votes per man. In December 1828, Mangum and the other electors assembled in Raleigh to carry out their official responsibilities, happily giving their state's fifteen electoral votes to the president-elect.[49]

While in the state capital, Willie Mangum received some more good news. The retirement of Judge Thomas Ruffin had left a vacancy on the Superior Court of Law and Equity. With no other seat to trade off, his opponents in the General Assembly could not prevent his election as they had one year before. So, on December 10, 1828, the General Assembly elected Mangum to the bench "without rival or opposition."[50] His official return to public service began January 12, 1829, the day Governor John Owen signed his commission from the Governor. Mangum rejoiced in the honor, but more importantly, he welcomed the much needed stipend that came with the position. The newly reappointed Judge did not have a say in which circuit he would cover in the Spring. His friend, fellow jurist James Martin, informed Mangum that the assignments had been made before his December 10 election. He presumed that Mangum would have no objection to riding the western Morganton Circuit in the Spring and the Raleigh Circuit during the Autumn months, but asked that Mangum let him know if either was inconvenient. Martin's desire

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[49] Remini, "Election of 1828," 1:433, 492; Marc W. Kruman, Parties and Politics in North Carolina, 1836-1865 (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1983), p. 18; Watson, Jacksonian Politics and Community Conflict, p. 110; Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 1:343-46; Raleigh Register, 5 December 1828.

[50] Quote from Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 1:352; See also, Cheney, North Carolina Government, pp. 361, 370.

to accommodate Mangum suggests that he held him in high esteem and would have honored a request for a different assignment. Mangum never made such a plea.[51]

At least one person who saw Mangum preside on the bench came away with a mixed impression. Attorney James Graham spoke of the efficiency with which Mangum attended to his case load. "Judge Mangum has done a great quantity of work on our circuit and given much satisfaction," Graham wrote his brother William. "He is prompt and quick to decide and right or wrong you know where he is and what he means." Graham noted, however, that Mangum was by no means "a profound lawyer." What he lacked in sagacity, he made up for in energy. These same qualities expressed themselves in his political career. Although never a profound thinker, he labored long hours as a party organizer and political manager. His speeches and letters show him to be an ordinary thinker with extraordinary drives.[52]

Personal tragedy struck the Mangum family during Willie's sojourn in the west. On March 11, 1829, his mother, Catherine Davis Mangum, passed away. Priestly Mangum relayed the sad news to his brother, telling him that, after lying in state for two days, "the corpse was decently interred" in the family plot. Her husband, William Person Mangum, was "powerfully affected" by her death, but took comfort in the company of his

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[51] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 1:352-354.

[52] J. G. de Roulhac Hamilton, et al., eds., The Papers of William Alexander Graham, 8 vols. (Raleigh: State Department of Archives and History, 1957-1992), 1:194.

friends and family at Red Mountain. Willie, on the other hand, continued at his post until the end of the term, mourning his mother's death in solitude.[53]

Judicial duties did not keep Mangum from building up his network of political connections. While in the western part of the state he met new friends and made a habit of learning their prejudices and interests. After concluding the day's official business, he would converse with the local gentry. Invariably, talk turned to politics. Marshall Polk, writing to his brother James K. Polk of Tennessee, spoke highly of Mangum when he recalled one such evening years later. "A most through & uncompromising friend of . . . Jackson," is how he described Mangum, adding that he was "a genuine & unblenching Southron in feeling & principle."[54] Mangum was also a good listener, collecting data with an eye toward the future. Although he freely shared the intelligence with his associates back home, he was clearly working to return himself to political office. Along with the intangible associations he made at this time, Mangum earned the gratitude of those to whom he awarded patronage. In the Fall of 1829, Mangum rode the highly prized Raleigh Circuit, placing him at the center of state politics. As usual he broadened his base of support in anticipation of higher office making connections that did not stop at the state

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[53] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 1:358-59.

[54] Herbert Weaver et. al., eds., The Correspondence of James K. Polk 7 vols. (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1969-1989), 1:363.

border. Through his friend Romulus Saunders, Mangum came to know members of the Van Buren machine in New York State.[55]

Judges on North Carolina's Superior Court were required by law to ride a different circuit each term. No Judge could serve two consecutive terms on the same circuit. So, early in 1830, Mangum and Judge William Norwood devised a new rotation for the coming year. In their version, Mangum had intentionally avoided the unpopular Edenton Circuit. No one, particularly Mangum, relished the idea of traveling that district, especially in the Fall, when the approaching winter made the otherwise dreadful conditions almost unbearable. When the four other Judges learned of Mangum and Norwood's design, they protested and drew up their own schedule. Judge Robert Strange then informed Mangum of their plan, which called for Mangum to ride Edenton in the Fall. He scolded Mangum, telling him that he ought to "courageously swallow" this "bitter dose" without complaint.[56] Mangum was saved from the travails of an Autumn in Edenton, however, when his co-conspirator, Norwood, volunteered to swap assignments. Mangum agreed; he would ride the Edenton Circuit in the Spring and the Wilmington Circuit in the Fall. Mangum's attempt to press his own agenda without consulting his colleagues was unusually heavy-handed for a man skilled in the art of compromise. For

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[55] J. G. de Roulhac Hamilton, ed., The Papers of Thomas Ruffin, 4 vols. (Raleigh: Edwards and Broughton, 1918-1920), 1:503; Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 1:360, 363; Hillsborough Recorder, 11 September 1861.

[56] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 1:364.

his transgression, he was rightly chastised. He went to Edenton that Spring to lick his wounds and ponder his next move.[57]

Within a month after embarking for the East, Mangum fell into his familiar pattern of loneliness, depression, and fatigue. A severe cold and digestive problems forced Mangum to cut back on some of his simple pleasures, pickles, pepper, and "spirits." He told his wife that the one drink of alcohol he did have that month "flushed my face & gave me a headache." Ordinarily, Mangum could consume much more without suffering such side effects. As for his promise to abstain from chewing tobacco, Mangum confessed that he had surrendered to temptation and resumed his habit. The blossoming flowers and lengthening days only reminded him that he had only spent one Spring with his family. Even when he was out of office, his legal practice kept him away from home for long stretches of time. The recent death of his mother compounded his deep depression. Distance and isolation led him to romanticize about what he had left behind. "Home dear, delightful home, is at last the only place where anything approaching happiness is to be enjoyed." Paradoxically, Mangum was never happy to leave Red Mountain, but spent his lifetime in pursuit of a career that caused him to do just that. A letter from his family physician, Benjamin Bullock, reminded Mangum why he had undertaken such an unpleasant chore. Referring to his ongoing financial problems, Mangum wrote, "Gold &

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[57] Ibid., 1:365.

Money is the root of all evil." Had he not been so eager to grow rich, Mangum thought of himself, then he never would have had to leave home.[58]

As Mangum labored on the bench, legislators in Raleigh were preparing to elect a new United States Senator. James Iredell, the man who had succeeded Nathaniel Macon in 1828, declared his intention to step down before the start of the March 1831 session of Congress. His announcement set off a power struggle that involved all of the major players in North Carolina politics. Politicians there worked within one of a handful of personal factions. Until 1828, Bartlett Yancey led the most powerful one in the state. His death that year muddied the waters, as several men vied for the right to replace him. By 1830, Richard Dobbs Spaight, Jr., of Craven County, had emerged from the pack as Yancey's likely successor. His hold on the organization was not as tight, however, as both Romulus Saunders and Bedford Brown laid partial claim to the leadership. Spaight, an eastern-born planter and the son and namesake of a former Governor, never enjoyed the legislative power exercised by his predecessor. He did, however, command the loyalty of such men as Charles Fisher, Joseph H. Bryan, Montfort Stokes, William Montgomery, and several others who would later form the core of the Democratic leadership in North Carolina. At the time, Willie Mangum was loosely affiliated with this group. He remained tentative in his support for both Jackson and anything that even remotely resembled a fully organized political party. The Spaight faction, as the group came to be

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[58] Ibid., 1:368.

known, exhibited those qualities to a greater degree than any other faction in North Carolina.[59]

The strongest challenge to the dominant Spaight faction came from a group of western leaders. David Caldwell of Salisbury and William J. Alexander of Charlotte led this less-cohesive faction. Both men mistrusted Jackson and both were close friends of Willie Mangum. Ex-Federalists William Gaston and William Meares, along with outgoing Senator James Iredell, often sided with this second group. Approximately half the men who considered themselves enemies of Spaight also counted themselves loyal to John Quincy Adams and Henry Clay. Opposition to the leading faction was not confined to the west. John Owen and Jesse Speight headed a group of easterners who challenged the dominance of the Spaight faction. Combined, these groups roughly constituted an opposition party and many of their leaders went on to create the Whig Party.[60]

Mangum's personal and professional ties to both the major factions put him in a unique position at the start of the 1830 senatorial contest. Without strong ideological commitments to guide them, both groups simply approached candidates they deemed "available," which, in nineteenth-century parlance, meant able to be elected by a diverse body. Accordingly, both factions looked to men like Mangum who were too young and cautious to have made many enemies and not strongly identified with one faction or the

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[59] Harold J. Counihan, "North Carolina 1815-1836: State and Local Perspectives in the Age of Jackson," (Ph. D. dissertation, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1971), pp. 84-87; William S. Hoffman, Andrew Jackson and North Carolina Politics (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1958), pp. 2, 14-15, 28.

[60] Hoffman, Andrew Jackson and North Carolina Politics, p. 29.

other. Shortly after Iredell announced his decision to retire, members from the two factions began the process of choosing a nominee from among their ranks. Each faction wanted little more than the prestige and power that would come with victory. A candidates' ideology mattered little. Iredell, still a force to be reckoned with, exhorted to his friends that they elect a man loyal to Jackson. No other criteria was suggested. With Jacksonians dominating the General Assembly, this would prove an easy task. Appeasing the ambitions and jealousies of the power brokers in Raleigh would be more difficult.[61]

During the late Fall of 1830, the leading candidates descended upon Raleigh to press their claims for the vacant seat. Most were familiar faces in state government for many had openly sought the post in 1828. Jesse Speight, one such man, put aside his own ambitions to promote the candidacy of Governor John Owen. He convinced former Federalist and fellow Jacksonian, William Gaston, to do the same. Another perennial fixture in state politics, Montfort Stokes, made it known that he too desired the job. His allies, certain he would fail, tried to dissuade him, but Stokes ignored their pleas and asked his friend Edmund Jones to place his name in nomination. Opponents of the Spaight faction relished the idea of running against Stokes, who had made many enemies during his long tenure in state government. They secretly urged him on. Stokes' stubborn persistence and his willingness to run without the full support of his allies attests to the lack of discipline within factions. The ability of one group to impose its will upon the

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[61] Ibid., pp. 31-32; Raleigh Star, 9 September 1830.

other show these to be loose-knit, unstable, and poorly disciplined organizations, vulnerable to manipulation from outside forces.[62]

Perhaps the most telling example of this instability was the candidacy of Willie Mangum. The leaders of the Spaight faction had pared down the list of candidates to four names; John R. Donnell, Willie Mangum, Charles Fisher, and Romulus Saunders. The latter two refused the honor and withdrew their names from consideration, leaving only Mangum and Donnell in the race. Lower echelon members of the faction remained evenly divided. Most were content to elect either man, but a vocal contingent of Donnell supporters wondered aloud if Mangum had the states-rights credentials needed to win over the General Assembly. To assuage their fears, Mangum submitted what modern analysts might call a "position paper," a written declaration of his views on federally funded internal improvements, loose construction of the constitution, and President Jackson. Mangum stated plainly that he opposed the first two and backed the last. Satisfied, most of the Donnell supporters fell in with the rest of their faction behind Mangum. Miscommunication, confusion, and pride threatened to disrupt all they had accomplished.[63]

While his friends in the Spaight faction pushed for Mangum's candidacy, Charles L. Hinton and William Sneed, representing the Caldwell-Alexander-Owen faction, worked to convince Mangum that he ought to run as <u>their</u> candidate. After polling their colleagues, Hinton, Sneed, and Alexander concluded Owen could not win. Despairing the

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[62] Hoffman, <u>Andrew Jackson and North Carolina Politics</u>, p. 32.

[63] Ibid; <u>Tarborough Free Press</u>, 15 February 1831.

possibility of a Donnell victory, Hinton and Sneed approached their friend Mangum. In him they saw the ideal candidate, a self-described Jacksonian with allies in every camp. Privately, some members of this faction hoped Mangum's nomination would split the opposition, thus ensuring the election of their first choice, Governor Owen. Hinton and Sneed, however, acted out of friendship and the desire to win.[64]

Initially, Mangum rejected their entreaties. Although he aspired to the post, he felt the field was already crowded with men more talented and experienced than himself. Enlisting the aid of Priestly Mangum, Sneed and Hinton stepped up their efforts to enlist Mangum. Combining flattery with appeals to principle, Sneed assured the Judge that he would make an excellent senator and warned of the consequences should he decline to run. Without Mangum, Sneed cautioned, the state would fall into the clutches of the "party," meaning the Spaight faction. Sneed had chosen his words carefully, for he knew Mangum shared his animosity for organized parties. Apparently another of Mangum's allies had worded his plea in similar antiparty language. The same day that Sneed wrote his letter, Charles Hinton received word through Priestly Mangum that his brother was prepared to run. Hinton agreed with Mangum that "the emergency of the times" demanded the participation of men free from the taint of faction. Doubtless Mangum was induced by the appeals of his fellow antipartisans. It is equally true that he was motivated by a desire for

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[64] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 1:379-81; Hoffman, Andrew Jackson and North Carolina Politics, pp. 32-33.

office. So, acting on both principle and self-interest, he gave his friends permission to place his name in nomination for the United States Senate.[65]

Support from both of the major factions did not guarantee Mangum a victory in the General Assembly. His consultations with each group had been carried out in secrecy, each unaware of what the other had planned. When one faction heard what the second intended, each moved to be the first to place Mangum's name in nomination. Both the Spaight faction and their opponents claimed the allegiance of Mangum. In reality, neither had it. Mangum could, in good conscience, make overtures to both factions because he regarded himself as an independent agent. Like many of his contemporaries, he viewed political alliances as temporary coalitions, not permanent organizations. When the work of the group was finished -- in this case, once it had elected Mangum to the Senate -- the coalition was to be disbanded. He would own nothing to his benefactors and would expect nothing in return. Alliances in a pre-partisan political culture were unstable and undisciplined, characteristics that prompted political leaders across the nation to begin fabricating stable, disciplined, and permanent political parties.

As the election approached, the power brokers met to plot strategy. Edward Ward, a leading member of the Spaight faction, met privately with Charles Hinton and convinced him to delay Mangum's nomination until November 25. Hinton agreed because he thought he needed more time to line up the necessary votes. Ward, however, reneged on the deal. When the Senate convened on November 25, Ward captured the floor immediately after

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[65] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 1:380-81.

the journal had been read into the record and placed Mangum's name in nomination. As if to punctuate their message, Jesse Bynum, acting on instructions from the Spaight faction, did the same on the floor of the House of Commons. The supporters of Owen were infuriated. They wanted the credit and rewards that would come with Mangum's success. Owen blamed Mangum personally for the turn of events and withdrew his backing. Meanwhile, Edmund Jones completed the field with his nomination of Montfort Stokes. On November 29, 1830, the joint assembly began balloting. Mangum out polled his rival on the first ballot by a vote of 80 to 67, but fell short of the amount needed to win. Shortly after the first votes had been tallied, Governor Owen entered the race. By the fourth ballot Stokes had all but vanished, receiving only 11 votes. Mangum and Owen were deadlocked with 89 votes each.[66]

The balloting process, which had already consumed several days and promised to consume several more, had frayed the nerves and quickened the tempers of the contestants and their floor managers. Daily intelligence reports told Mangum of his diminishing chances. From what he could gather, Owen had not only betrayed him by entering the race, but had publicly assailed his character and principles. Incensed, he wrote both Owen and Ward on December 1, 1830, to counter accusations that he had been controlling events in Raleigh from his home at Red Mountain. "It is a leading principle upon which I have always acted . . . to shew [sic] my hand unreservedly in all political transactions," Mangum wrote in response to charges that he had surreptitiously conducted a campaign

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[66] Ibid., 1:389-93; McFarland, "Rip Van Winkle," pp. 306-07; Hoffman, Andrew Jackson and North Carolina Politics, p. 33.

of character assassination against Owen. To emphasize his point, Mangum openly challenged Owen's integrity. "I have implicated your political principles in the strongest & most unequivocal manner."[67] Fed up with the "mystery, subterfuge, & concealment" that had marked the entire process, Mangum asked his backers to recant his nomination.[68]

In Raleigh, Mangum's troops did their best keep his chances alive. Instead of withdrawing Mangum's name, as he had instructed, they stalled. On December 2, 1830, the assembly voted for the fifth time. Mangum now trailed Owen by the vote of 97 to 86. Sensing a shift in momentum away from Mangum, Hinton, Sneed, and Romulus Saunders, moved for, and received, an extended weekend recess. They hoped to use the extra time to draw supporters away from Owen and to persuade Mangum to come to Raleigh to defend his name. Owen, Saunders wrote, had been maligning Mangum during his visits with wavering legislators. Only Mangum's direct intervention, he warned, could salvage his candidacy.[69] Up until this time Mangum had resisted all efforts to get him to come to Raleigh. Now he had a second reason to go to the capital. On December 4, Owen wrote Mangum to accept what he interpreted as "an invitation to the field of honor."[70] Owen took personal offence to what Mangum had written in his letter of December 1, 1830. Mangum responded quickly. The following day he sent off a note explaining his position. He confessed "a strong expression of surprise" that Owen would take such a statement to

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[67] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P.Mangum, 1:388.

[68] Ibid., 1:389.

[69] Ibid., 1:391-92.

[70] Ibid., 1:395.

heart. "Comments of this sort," he explained, fell "within the range of legitimate criticism of public men & their public principles." He added that by making his comments directly to Owen, rather than behind the Governor's back, he avoided the unprincipled act of "striking a blow in the dark." Professing shock that Owen would even suggest such disreputable behavior, he explained that dueling was illegal in the state of North Carolina and that as a Judge he had no intention of violating the law.[71] Intermediaries stepped in at once to calm the situation. With their aid. Owen and Mangum resolved their differences peacefully, but not until after the election had been settled.

Mangum arrived in Raleigh during the weekend recess to meet with Owen and muster additional support for his cause. His presence, along with his denunciation of Owen, convinced Spaight that he had in Mangum an unwavering ally. Mangum reaffirmed his opposition to federally funded internal improvements, a stand that differentiated him from Owen, and his support for Andrew Jackson. He was joined in Raleigh by Donnell, who, like Spaight, urged his followers to vote for Mangum. Together, these actions turned the course of the election. On Monday, December 6, 1830, the Assembly resumed balloting. On the sixth ballot, Mangum took a 96 to 86 lead. The next ballot put him over the top. After seven ballots, taken over several days, the General Assembly elected Willie P. Mangum to the United States Senate by a vote of 103 to 84. Four days later Mangum resigned from the bench and returned home to put his affairs in order. His backers believed they had just elected a solid Jacksonian. In reality, they had

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[71] Ibid., 1:395-96.

picked a man who had been wavering from the start, uncomfortable with many of the president's measures, but even less comfortable with the idea of having no allies. So, the reluctant Jacksonian would bide his time at Red Mountain for one year before setting off to Washington to begin his career in the Senate.[72]

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[72] North Carolina, General Assembly, Journal of the House of Commons (Raleigh: State Printer, 1830), pp. 202, 208; Raleigh Register, 9 December 1830; Raleigh Star, 9 December 1830; Cheney, North Carolina Government, pp. 370, 678; McFarland, "Rip Van Winkle," p. 307; Hoffman, Andrew Jackson and North Carolina Politics, p. 34; William J. Cooper, Jr., The South and the Politics of Slavery, 1828-1856 (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1978), p. 6.

CHAPTER 5
PLAYING CHESS

Willie Mangum spent his first two years in the United States Senate in search of an identity. He was not alone in this quest. The fragile alliances that had formed in the wake of the election of 1824 were beginning to unravel. The majority party, first drawn together by the persona of their leader, Andrew Jackson, now had to formulate policies. With each new measure, with each new stand, came new enemies. Willie Mangum counted himself among the growing ranks of the disenchanted, upset by what he saw as Jackson's extralegal policies and the political gamesmanship consuming official Washington. "Every move on the political chessboard has been made with an eye toward the move of the adversary," he complained to his friend James Iredell in 1832. But Mangum too was playing chess. As the administration moved steadily from the states rights conservatism and strict construction of both Mangum and key elements of his constituency, the junior Senator found himself seeking new alliances with old foes. The shift was tentative, uncertain, and, at times, confusing. His caution was well founded, for Jackson continued to enjoy strong support in North Carolina and Mangum feared the backlash his political somersault would elicit. Gradually, Mangum's statements about the General and his coterie of advisors went from celebratory to condemnatory. By the winter

of 1833-34 he was prepared to denounce openly the administration, waiting only for an issue that would resonate with the people at home.[1]

The game Mangum described to Iredell began shortly after Jackson's inauguration. The new president's promise to bring down the cost of government had universal appeal. The implementation of his program of retrenchment, however, left many people out of work and questioning the General's motives. To create a well-ordered bureaucracy and remove ineffective or dishonest people from office, Jackson accelerated the policy of rotation in office begun during the Jefferson administration. In his first eighteen months in office he replaced 919 of the 10,093 officeholders in the federal government. Noble intentions aside, Jackson also dismissed men whom he deemed disloyal or subversive to his administration. It was this latter practice that caused an uproar in anti-Jackson circles. Criticism of the "spoils system" came from Jacksonians as well. Many of them felt they had been denied their fair share of the patronage and others, particularly conservatives, were uncomfortable with the idea of bestowing such power on the president. Willie Mangum and other North Carolinians felt slighted by the administration's patronage policies. Mangum's inherent suspicion of powerful executives compounded his sense of alienation. The intra-party imbroglio that began with Peggy Eaton and ended with the reordering of the cabinet led Mangum to break his silence. He compared the government under Jackson to a "joint stock company for the distribution of patronage," where, for a

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[1] Willie P. Mangum to James Iredell, 11 February 1832, James Iredell Papers, Special Collections, Duke University Library, Durham, North Carolina.

price, anyone could reap the benefits of the public treasury.[2] By early 1834 he had joined a growing chorus of southerners who watched the rise of Martin Van Buren with trepidation. "It is one of the alarming signs of the decay of public virtue," Mangum wrote of Van Buren, "that a man may attain [the presidency] without public service, high talent, or any thing strongly to sustain him, except simply the patronage of the [executive government]."[3]

The Peggy Eaton affair and the reorganization of the cabinet capped a series of policy disputes that divided members of the Jackson coalition. Vice President John C. Calhoun, one of the most visible leaders of the new opposition, expressed puzzlement over the chief executive's denunciation of Chief Justice John Marshall's ruling in the Supreme Court decision of Worcester v. Georgia. Jackson invoked states rights principles he had once attacked as subversive when employed by Calhoun in his condemnation of the tariff, proof, the Vice President reasoned, that the General lacked a consistent political ideology. Despite Calhoun's own objections, Jackson's Indian Policy and his veto of the Maysville Road Bill were popular with old line Republicans in the South. While his relocation of the Native American tribes to lands west of the Mississippi River did not initiate wholesale

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[2] Willie P. Mangum to William H. Haywood, 31 May 1832, Willie Person Mangum Family Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.; Lynn L. Marshall, "The Strange Stillbirth of the Whig Party," American Historical Review 72 (1967): 454-55; Glyndon G. Van Deusen, The Jacksonian Era: 1828-1848 (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1959), pp. 35-36.

[3] Henry Thomas Shanks, ed., The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 5 vols. (Raleigh: State Department of Archives and History, 1950-1956), 2:75.

party realignment in Congress, the preceding debate did help cement the alliance that had opposed Jackson's candidacy in 1828.[4]

At the same time, anti-administration forces across the nation remained divided over important questions of policy. With politicians representing the entire political spectrum and every region, the opposition's ability to present a united front was hindered by divisions over policy and clashing egos. In 1830 Thomas Hart Benton of Missouri and Robert Hayne of South Carolina tried to fuse the issues of tariff reduction and cheap public land into a single package to bring together southern and western interests. Jackson favored postponing the distribution of the proceeds from public land sales until after the national debt had been liquidated. Benton argued that settlers in his region wanted the land now, not at some indeterminate time in the future. In 1832, Henry Clay tried to revamp federal land policy, changing the way proceeds from public land sales were distributed by the federal government to individual states. His plan would allot an additional 10 percent of the revenue to the states that had surrendered the land. Although his proposal failed, the effort to unite regional anti-Jackson forces using substantive issues had begun. Tariff

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[4] David J. Russo, "The Major Political Issues of the Jacksonian Period and the Development of Party Loyalty in Congress, 1830-1840," Transactions of the American Philosophical Society 62 (1972): 12-14; Thomas Brown, Politics and Statesmanship: Essays on the American Whig Party (New York: Columbia University Press, 1975), p. 156; William S. Hoffman, "John Branch and the Origins of the Whig Party in North Carolina," North Carolina Historical Review 35 (1958): 302; George Rawlings Poage, Henry Clay and the Whig Party (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1936), p. 6; Van Deusen, The Jacksonian Era, p. 50.

reduction and inexpensive land would finally prove a poor choice for such a venture, but the seeds of cooperation had been sown.[5]

Internal administration rivalries, rooted in the struggle to succeed Jackson as President of the United States, culminated in April 1831, when Jackson restructured his cabinet. Calhoun and Van Buren worked tirelessly to win the favor of the President. While Calhoun loyalists dominated Jackson's original cabinet, Van Buren developed a close personal relationship with the General. Conflict began when Floride Calhoun, wife of the Vice President, convinced the wives of the cabinet officers to ostracize Peggy Eaton, the wife of Secretary of War John Eaton. Allegations of adultery and sexual impropriety hounded Mrs. Eaton since the death of her first husband and her subsequent marriage to Eaton. Jackson loathed these attacks and demanded that Peggy Eaton be accorded the same respect and courtesy given any woman of her high station. But Peggy Eaton remained an outcast. Sensing an opportunity to win Jackson's trust and genuinely concerned for the feelings of the Eatons, Van Buren, a widower, convinced them that he did not share the ill will of his fellow cabinet members. In rumor-mongering Washington, the New York politician could expect word of his kindness to reach the appreciative ear of the President.[6]

Divisions inside the administration worsened as power plays within the cabinet intensified. Alarmed by Calhoun's powerful grip on his cabinet and the South Carolinian's

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[5] Van Deusen, The Jacksonian Era, pp. 40, 58-60.

[6] Margaret L. Coit, John C. Calhoun: American Portrait (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1950), pp. 193-195, 198-201.

support for the doctrine of nullification, Jackson turned to Van Buren and his unofficial advisors, known collectively as the "kitchen cabinet," to plan his next move. Van Buren convinced Jackson to purge the cabinet of Calhoun's influence. He presented the President with evidence that Calhoun had tried to censure the General in 1818 for what Calhoun had characterized as an illegal incursion into Spanish Florida. Jackson fumed but chose to let the matter die down. When Calhoun issued a pamphlet detailing the events of his feud with Van Buren, the General decided to act. Van Buren and Eaton willingly resigned their posts, allowing Jackson to ask the same of Secretary of the Treasury Samuel D. Ingham, Secretary of the Navy John Branch, and Attorney General John M. Berrien. The three Calhounites obliged. Jackson replaced them with men loyal to himself and Van Buren. The move ushered in a new era in southern politics. Calhoun's men had been swept from the administration and with them went much of the southern influence. Berrien and Branch, from Georgia and North Carolina respectively, took away important local, state, and regional connections and large personal followings. Jackson's hold on the South was slipping.[7] Willie Mangum remained in the Jackson fold, but admired the way Branch carried himself. "Our friend Branch . . . bore himself throughout with the manliness of a southern gentleman," he wrote several months after the episode. He could not say the

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[7] Edward Pessen, Jacksonian America: Society, Personality, and Politics (Homewood Ill.: The Dorsey Press, rev. ed., 1978), p. 292; Van Deusen, The Jacksonian Era, pp. 43-46; Hoffman, "John Branch," p. 299; Burton W. Folsom II, "Party Formation & Development in Jacksonian America: The Old South," Journal of American Studies 7 (1973): 221, 223-24; Richard E. Ellis, The Union at Risk: Jacksonian Democracy, States' Rights and the Nullification Crisis (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), p. 70; Arthur C. Cole, The Whig Party in the South (Washington, D.C.: American Historical Association, 1913), pp. 8-9.

same of Jackson. "The President has spoken of him in terms not to be endured & not to be easily explained."[8]

The first session of the twenty-second congress, Mangum's first as a United States Senator, began in December 1831 and was expected to last seven or eight weeks. Cold and tired, Mangum debarked from the steamboat that had carried him up the Potomac. He informed his wife Charity that the city had undergone some impressive physical changes in his absence but assured her that his colleagues continued to act as they had before. Rather than follow fashion and board in a densely-packed rooming house, Mangum decided to settle in "a small mess on Capitol Hill." There he found comfort with fellow southerners, Senators Samuel Smith of Maryland and William King of Alabama, and two others whom he did not name. From his third floor room he could watch the new canal carry people and commerce through the city. He could also "read & study" in quiet solitude, far above the busy street. Heavy snow kept him indoors during his first weeks in the capital, limiting his ability to reacquaint himself with the city and visit friends. He did, however, run into Henry Clay and commented to his wife that he "looks well & like an old friend." Long captivated by his charm and affability, Mangum would soon look upon Clay as a dear personal friend and, later, as a valued ally.[9]

In his first test of loyalty to the administration, Mangum was asked to support the president's nomination of Martin Van Buren as ambassador to the Court of Saint James.

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[8] Willie P. Mangum to James Iredell, 11 February 1832, James Iredell Papers, Special Collections, Duke University Library, Durham, North Carolina.

[9] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 1:424-26.

Jackson had named the former Secretary of State to the post in June 1831 while Congress was in recess. Van Buren left for London before receiving confirmation from the Senate. Having reconvened, opponents of the administration in the Senate, led by Calhoun and Clay, wanted to use the vote to test party solidarity and publicly humiliate Van Buren. The vote marked the beginning of a marriage of convenience between Clay and Calhoun. On this issue Mangum stood by the president, speaking favorably of Van Buren and voting for his confirmation.[10] Privately, Mangum admitted that Van Buren may not have been the best choice for the post, but that had done nothing to warrant his recall. Besides, he added with a sense of national pride, "I most decidedly disapprove of exposing in any shape or for any purpose our domestic dissensions to foreign powers."[11] Calhoun did not share Mangum's sense of propriety. He used his new pull with Clay's men to arrange the vote so it would end in a tie, giving him the opportunity as Vice President to cast the deciding vote against his enemy. His plan worked.[12] Of the new partnership between Clay and Calhoun, Mangum could only scoff. "The idea of a coalition between Calhoun & Clay is ridiculous. They met on the Van Buren question like two ships might meet on the . . . Pacific - to pass & never meet again."[13]

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[10] Ibid., 1:462, 485; William S. Hoffman, Andrew Jackson and North Carolina Politics (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1958), p. 44.

[11] Willie P. Mangum to James Iredell, 11 February 1832, James Iredell Papers, Special Collections, Duke University Library, Durham, North Carolina.

[12] Van Deusen, The Jacksonian Era, p. 58.

[13] Willie P. Mangum to James Iredell, 11 February 1832, James Iredell Papers, Special Collections, Duke University Library, Durham, North Carolina.

If Mangum regarded one party as the object of ridicule, the other was fast becoming the object of scorn. Like the American colonists of the 1760s who condemned the King's parliament before criticizing the King himself, Mangum first faulted those around "King Andrew I" for the misconduct of the administration. "The President, with the best of intentions, I fear listens too much to persons wholly unworthy of respect or confidence," Mangum wrote less than a month after the January 1832 vote rejecting Van Buren. One by one, Mangum evaluated the members of the cabinet for his associate James Iredell, finding little to give him hope. He described Secretary of State Edward Livingston as "a mere cypher" and Secretary of War Lewis Cass as little more than a bureaucrat. Given the nature of Jackson's advisors, Mangum felt that "the opportunity for doing much good [was] lost." Be that as it may, he would enjoy the remainder of the session. "The winter has been rather gay," he reported to Iredell. Parties offered him the opportunity to drink, dance, and talk politics, three of his favorite pastimes. Putting aside political differences, he dined with Attorney General Roger B. Taney and found his company pleasing. Mangum did not condone much of what the administration did with regard to patronage and policy, but he would not forego social activities simply because they took place at the home of an adversary.[14]

While Mangum regarded patronage in the hands of a president as dangerous and a threat to liberty, he apparently saw nothing wrong with it when dispensed by a United State Senator. During his first session in the upper chamber Mangum received numerous

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[14] Ibid.

requests for favors. Most came from influential leaders in North Carolina, but they were not limited to them. Walker Anderson, a schoolmaster from Hillsborough, expressed his gratitude and sense of obligation to the senator for placing his kin at West Point. Romulus Saunders, who had made the same request on behalf of his son Franklin, thanked Mangum when the appointment came through. Mangum dealt directly with Secretary of War Lewis Cass when Duncan Cameron requested such an appointment for his nephew, William Cameron. His patron also asked that Mangum secure a judicial post for his brother John. Cameron later credited Mangum with placing John on the bench. Accumulating the good will of powerful figures in his home state, Mangum also worked to reach the reading public. In a request for a postal route, C. H. Jordan pointed out that disseminating information to outlying counties was essential if Mangum wanted to keep his name and his message before the public. Whether he acted on this particular request is uncertain. During his long career Mangum made many appeals for such routes and his name and message did stay with the people of North Carolina.[15]

The political realignment Mangum likened to a game of chess continued through the presidential election of 1832. Dissatisfied southern Jacksonians moved cautiously. Afraid to launch direct attacks against the popular hero of New Orleans, southern Democrats pursued his running mate, Martin Van Buren, instead. On May 21, 1832, 334 delegates representing every state except Missouri gathered in Baltimore for the first national Democratic Party convention. The assemblage approved nominations made by

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[15] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 1:422, 457, 470, 514, 519, 548-49.

several states, handing Jackson an uncontested nomination for a second term. The vice presidential spot went to Martin Van Buren, who took 208 votes on the first ballot. Virginia's Philip Barbour received 49 votes and Kentucky's Richard M. Johnson garnered 26. In a show of unanimity, the convention decreed Van Buren the choice of the entire body. No plank, no statement of principles emerged from Baltimore, only the hero, his reputation, and Martin Van Buren.[16]

Even before the Van Buren nomination, North Carolina's top Jacksonians worried about the negative effect he would have on the ticket in their state. Constituents and colleagues besieged Mangum, seeking information about prospective vice presidential candidates or warning of the consequences should Van Buren get the nod. In January, Romulus Saunders told Mangum that he agreed with the Senator, that Van Buren "should not be brought forward . . . for V- President, unless . . . he should be rejected" as Minister to Great Britain.[17] The next month, Mangum confessed to James Iredell that, although he believed Van Buren's nomination inevitable, he was nevertheless opposed. For Mangum the main issue was electability. Van Buren, he feared, would be a drag on the ticket in North Carolina. Judge John McLean of Ohio, Mangum offered, would be the better choice. McLean's lack of candor did not bother the pragmatist. "Judge McLean's policy seems to have been never to show even the tip of his finger in dangerous questions

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[16] Robert V. Remini, "Election of 1832," in Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., Fred L. Israel, and William P. Hansen, eds., History of American Presidential Elections: 1789-1968, 4 vols. (New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1971), 1:498, 507-08.

[17] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 1:462.

of general politics," Mangum wrote Iredell, adding frankly, "My respect for him, has on that account not been of the highest order - nor do I hold his ability in very high respect." As a northern man with opinions not entirely offensive to the South, however, McLean would "bring to us what we so much need, numerical & political force."[18]

Martin Reed of Halifax, North Carolina, did not share Mangum's desire to appease northern voters. He advocated placing favorite son John Branch on the ticket. Speaking for his friends, Reed informed the senator that Van Buren would be an unpopular selection. Bluntly, Spencer O'Brien, a Commoner from Granville County, warned his ally that Van Buren would be "dead weight" on Jackson and that Philip Barbour or Judge William Smith, a native of North Carolina, were preferable.[19] State legislator John Martin of Wilkes County echoed the sentiments of Reed and O'Brien. Van Buren, he speculated, would split their ranks. Like Reed, Martin was most troubled by Van Buren's reputation as an advocate of protective tariffs. Mangum found himself trapped, forced to choose between old friends at home and the leader of the national party.[20]

Former Secretary of the Navy John Branch led the assault on Van Buren in North Carolina. James Iredell, John Owen, and Charles Fisher also aligned themselves against Van Buren. Even William Polk, the state-level director of Jackson's 1824 and 1828 presidential campaigns, opposed the General on the choice of Van Buren. The New

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[18] Willie P. Mangum to James Iredell, 11 February 1832, James Iredell Papers, Special Collections, Duke University Library, Durham, North Carolina.

[19] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 1:494.

[20] Ibid., 1:462, 500-501, 513.

Yorker was considered a political hack, unworthy of high office. His connection to the Albany Regency disturbed North Carolinians who professed a distaste for party intrigue. Branch branded Van Buren "the father of the tariffs" of 1824 and 1828, a fabrication with no basis in fact, and the state press adopted the tag. Political chieftains privately proposed several alternatives to Van Buren, including Branch, William Gaston, and Willie Mangum, but refused to move until they saw how anti-Van Buren movements elsewhere would respond.[21]

Once the delegates in Baltimore had made their decision, leaders from several southern states, including North Carolina, felt compelled to act. Responding to a call from Branch, the anti-Van Buren Jacksonians met at the Governor's mansion in Raleigh. The poorly attended meeting, which took place on June 18, 1832, included representatives from only eighteen of the state's sixty-four counties. They labeled Van Buren "odious," calling particular attention to his support of the tariff, and selected Philip Barbour as an alternative vice presidential candidate on the Jackson ticket.[22] Many North Carolina Democrats thought the Virginian one of their own, a southerner who advocated a reduced tariff. He would later write that protective tariffs ran counter to the "spirit of the

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[21] Hoffman, "John Branch and the Origins of the Whig Party," pp. 304-305; Herbert Dale Pegg, The Whig Party in North Carolina, Chapel Hill: Colonial Press, 1968), p. 3; Daniel M. McFarland, "Rip Van Winkle: Political Evolution in North Carolina," (Ph. D. dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1954), pp. 355-56; Harry L. Watson, Jacksonian Politics and Community Conflict: The Emergence of the Second American Party System in Cumberland County, North Carolina (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1981), p. 177.

[22] Richard P. McCormick, The Second American Party System: Party Formation in the Jacksonian Era (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1966), p. 205.

constitution" and denied the legality of both a national bank and federally funded internal improvements.[23] Before adjourning, the rump established a central committee to organize the statewide Jackson-Barbour movement and to coordinate their work with similar drives in Virginia, Alabama, Mississippi, and Georgia.[24] James Iredell had summed up their public position some months earlier when he asked Willie Mangum, "Is it not important to the South that we should have a Vice-President of our principles?"[25] In fact, his objections to the New Yorker, as well as those of his allies, were based on personal differences as much they were on questions of principle. Southern Jacksonians who had fallen from grace after the reorganization of the cabinet had voiced their dissatisfaction with the administration without directly challenging the president.[26]

Mangum thought the Barbour movement ill advised, predicting it would have no impact on the November election. He shared these feelings with most Jacksonians back home, including Romulus Saunders, who remained steadfastly pro-Van Buren throughout the race. Unlike Mangum, he did not express misgivings as to the viability of the ticket. Prior to the convention Mangum opposed the nomination, and later, after he had split from the Democrats, would say that he had cast his vote for Van Buren with "deep

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[23] Philip Barbour to Joseph H. Bryan, 9 September 1832, quoted in Hoffman, Andrew Jackson and North Carolina Politics, p. 55.

[24] McCormick, The Second American Party System, p. 205.

[25] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 1:472.

[26] William J. Cooper, Jr., The South and the Politics of Slavery, 1828-1856, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1978), p. 19; Richard P. McCormick, "Was There a 'Whig Strategy' in 1836?" Journal of the Early Republic 4 (1984): 49; Watson, Jacksonian Politics and Community Conflict, p. 178.

reluctance."[27] For now, however, he remained loyal to the party. Once the decree had come down from the White House that the New Yorker would be the nominee, Mangum fell in line. Late in the Summer of 1832, Mangum felt sure he had backed the right horse. "If two tickets are to run," he wrote, referring to the Jackson-Van Buren and Jackson-Barbour tickets, "the regular nomination will succeed."[28] His brother Priestly shared his opinion. In October even Barbour recognized the futility of his candidacy and withdrew his name from the ballot. Mangum had staked his future on the regular ticket of Jackson and Van Buren. He could only hope that the reports from Priestly and the others had been accurate.[29]

The Jackson-Van Buren slate took all of North Carolina's 15 electoral votes in the November election. Tallying 21,006 votes, they beat Henry Clay and John Sergeant of Pennsylvania, running together under the "National Republican" banner, by 16,468 votes. The Jackson-Barbour ticket finished third with 4,225 votes. Anti-Mason candidate William Wirt's name did not appear on the North Carolina ballot. Jackson ran well in the South. He took 68 percent of the region's popular vote and won all its electoral votes, save those of South Carolina, where the state legislature awarded the state's eleven to John Floyd of Virginia. Lingering resentment over the tariff accounted for this largely symbolic

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[27] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 5:582; McCormick, The Second American Party System, p. 205; Willie P. Mangum to James Iredell, 11 February 1832, James Iredell Papers, Special Collections, Duke University Library, Durham, North Carolina.

[28] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 1:569.

[29] Ibid., 1:566; McCormick, "Was There a 'Whig Strategy' in 1836?" p. 49.

gesture. In the national tally, Jackson won 219 electoral votes: Clay could only manage 49, while Wirt won seven and Floyd eleven.[30]

Despite their landslide, the Jacksonians showed signs of weakness. The hero's popular majority had slipped by more than 1.5 percentage points from the previous contest, the first such drop in the history of American presidential politics. The actions of the South Carolina state legislature and the Barbour Democrats revealed a growing chasm between Jackson and important elements of his Southern constituency. Across the South, Democrats could see the collapse of one-party rule. In North Carolina, for example, the incumbent carried all except one county, but lost much of his support in the west, where he once appeared invincible. State leaders who had initiated the Barbour movement drifted into permanent opposition. Given time and the retirement of Jackson, these men, capable organizers one and all, would build a viable alternative to the Democratic Party in North Carolina. Although Mangum had kept his distance during the presidential election, he shared their suspicion of Martin Van Buren, protective tariffs, and concentrated power. Transferring his allegiance from one group to the next, therefore, would be easy if, as Mangum was beginning to suspect, the administration fell under the spell of the "Little Magician" and his party.[31]

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[30] Remini, "Election of 1832," 1:515, 574, 581.

[31] Ibid., 1:515, 581; Max R. Williams, "The Foundations of the Whig Party in North Carolina: A Synthesis and a Modest Proposal," North Carolina Historical Review 47 (1970): 117; Henry M. Wagstaff, State Rights and Political Parties in North Carolina, 1776-1861, Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press,1906), p. 64; Watson, Jacksonian Politics and Community Conflict, p. 178; William S. Hoffman, "Willie P. Mangum and the Whig Revival of the Doctrine of Instructions," Journal of Southern History 22 (1956): 340.

During the presidential election campaign of 1832 President Andrew Jackson himself was the main issue. A remnant of the age of the politics of personality, one's love for or hatred of the President seemed to govern decisions at the ballot box. New concerns arose over the conduct of the administration about tariff policy and the National Bank. The Tariff of 1828, labeled the "tariff of abominations" by its southern detractors, was a Democratic measure. In an attempt to win over voters in Pennsylvania and New York during the election of 1828, members of the Jackson coalition won a modestly protective tariff. Southern Jacksonians were betrayed, or so their leaders said. The public saw little, if any, correlation between tariff policy and their economic well-being. In order to excite them, therefore, opponents of the tariff began to "educate" voters, telling them that liberty and a healthy economy were outgrowths of a low tariff. Creating public opinion where it once did not exist ranked among the first duties of nineteenth-century American politicians.[32]

The most vociferous opponent of the 1828 revision was John Calhoun. His Exposition and Protest argued that the individual states, not the Supreme Court, had the final say in deciding the constitutionality of federal laws. By his reasoning any state legislature could nullify a law, the tariff for instance, if it was deemed inviolate of the expressed powers of the constitution. Narrowly read, the document allowed for states to

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[32] Robert V. Remini, "Election of 1828," in Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., Fred L. Israel, and William P. Hansen, eds., History of American Presidential Elections: 1789-1968, 4 vols. (New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1971), 1:425; Remini, "Election of 1832," 1:516; Thomas E. Jeffrey, State Parties and National Politics: North Carolina, 1815-1861 (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1989), p. 146; Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 1:504-06.

declare laws null and void, nothing more. But critics and advocates alike read into it, and later pronouncements by the Vice President, who at first did not openly admit authorship, much more. Hence forward, questions concerning tariff policy became entangled with debates over the nature of the federal union, the legality of secession, and the rights of the states.[33]

Released shortly after the passage of the Tariff of 1828, Calhoun's Exposition received a great deal of attention in North Carolina. Although representatives from that state had unanimously opposed the 1828 Tariff Bill, as well as those passed in 1816 and 1824, public opinion there was beginning to turn in favor of moderate protection by 1830. In 1828, both the Raleigh Register and Hillsborough Recorder, the two most widely circulated newspapers in Mangum's district, came out in favor of protection.[34] Mangum was slow to follow. In February 1832, he told his friend James Iredell that he still held Calhoun and his work in high esteem. "I shall state the naked fact, unpopular as it is," he wrote of the South Carolinian's Exposition, "the publication which deprived him of almost all his popularity and power, raised him higher in my estimation than he had ever before stood." Mangum added that, nullification aside, "the principles promulgated in [the] exposition . . . [are] the principles of the Constitution." The tariff, he seethed, was nothing more than the "legalized plunder of the profits of [southern] labor." Greed, not

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[33] William W. Freehling, Prelude to Civil War: The Nullification Controversy in South Carolina, 1816-1836 (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1965), pp. 158-68, 175, 225.

[34] Pegg, The Whig Party in North Carolina, p. 4.

principle, drove protectionists to enact the tariff; fear, not principle, led them to scramble for compromise when crisis loomed. "The politicians who first excited the spirit of avarice for political purposes," Mangum said of the protectionists, "for political purposes [are] now willing to sooth it."[35]

Mangum withheld his praise for Calhoun's intellectual prowess and concerned himself instead with the fears of his allies in North Carolina. John Scott, a lawyer from Hillsborough, kept Mangum abreast of local attitudes regarding the tariff. As far as he could gather, the community worried more for the safety of the Union than it did for any tariff, high or low. "In North Carolina, I know of but one feeling, a feeling of deepest horror, at the very thought of a dissolution of the Union." By December 18, 1831, the day Scott wrote his letter to the Senator, nullification and secession had become intertwined in the minds of his friends and neighbors.[36] Priestly Mangum further advised his brother "not to go ahead of public opinion" in support of nullification. "Nothing short of tangible oppression would wean them from the Union," the younger Mangum wrote. Priestly implied that the average voter was incapable of comprehending the abstruse constitutional theories that politicians loved to expound. His brother should avoid outbursts about "unconstitutional resistance" and stick to common platitudes and standard recriminations, using language that could be broadly defined and easily understood.[37]

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[35] Willie P. Mangum to James Iredell, 11 February 1832, James Iredell Papers, Special Collections, Duke University Library, Durham, North Carolina.

[36] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 1:432.

[37] Ibid., 1:450.

On February 7 and 8, 1832, Willie Mangum delivered his first major speech to the United States Senate. It came as the body was debating Henry Clay's combined efforts to reconfigure the existing tariff schedule and distribute proceeds from the sale of public land to the individual states. The debate, which had been going on since the preceding December, divided politicians along sectional rather than party lines, partly because Clay had failed to convince potential southern supporters like Mangum that the tariff he proposed was a revenue bill. The Kentuckian's scheme to unite western and southern opponents of the administration was temporarily halted.[38] His determination to push the tariff bill through the Senate despite southern reservations bothered Mangum, who was beginning to see the darker side of a man he had once greatly admired. "Mr. Clay's course has but little of dignity," Mangum observed. "He is sore & irritable & in truth 7 . . . revoltingly coarse - with little of that high & elevated feeling that I once supposed never deserted him." He continued: "I regard him as the most dangerous man in the country and I am sorry to say, against all my former opinions of him, that I strongly suspect him to be wholly unprincipled."[39]

Mangum's friends in Washington looked forward to his speech, but not the nervous Senator, who began his remarks by confessing his "unfeigned reluctance to participate in

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[38] Van Deusen, The Jacksonian Era, pp. 58-60; Russo, "The Major Political Issues of the Jacksonian Period," p. 8.

[39] Willie P. Mangum to James Iredell, 11 February 1832, James Iredell Papers, Special Collections, Duke University Library, Durham, North Carolina.

this debate."[40] While the intellectual Calhoun spoke to constitutional scholars and other learned individuals, the pragmatist Mangum spoke to the masses. His speech was intended for public consumption and his plan was to cast the debate in simple economic terms. He sought to give meaning to an issue that had little resonance with the rank and file but meant a great deal to the elite. He also wanted to appeal to their patriotism. Protectionists, Mangum reasoned, not the advocates of free trade, were the greatest menace to the Union. Motivated by greed and unmoved by suffering, they were "undermining the fabric of our noble institutions."[41] The tariff, as Mangum put it, was more than a sectional issue; it was a class issue as well. Recalling anti-party themes and the Jeffersonian concept of an agrarian republic, he denounced the "monopolists, capitalists, and adventuring politicians who divide among themselves the richest spoils . . . and throw but a crumb - if indeed so much - to the mere serfs of party."[42] The villains he spoke of knew no sectional boundaries. They could be found living on plantations along the Gulf Coast as surely as in the mansions along Fifth Avenue in New York City. "Where is the justice of taxing millions of the poor to swell the already overgrown wealth of a few hundred sugar planters in Louisiana?"[43] The heroes of Mangum's morality play

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[40] For quote see, Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 5:519; The entire speech has been reprinted in, ibid., 5:519-562; Isaac Tomkins to Charlotte Tomkins, 30 January 1832, Isaac Tomkins Letters, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.

[41] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 5:520.

[42] Ibid., 5:543.

[43] Ibid., 5:536.

were the small farmers, both northern and southern, unfairly burdened by an unjust tariff.

Despite Mangum's reference to southern capitalists, most of the speech evinced an anti-northern bias. He referred repeatedly to the injustices that elements of the North had inflicted against "the agricultural and planting states," which, in his parlance, meant the South. Southerners, specifically poor whites and small farmers, paid a disproportionate share of the taxes levied by the federal government. Despite divine blessings -- a mild climate and fertile soil, for example -- the Southern states had succumbed to economic hardship, the result, Mangum asserted, of Northern rapacity. "The unequal action of the Government has more than counterbalanced the bounties of Providence - that those delightful regions of the South, upon which Heaven seemed to have smiled with beneficence, are silently passing into decay and sterility." Meanwhile, Mangum continued, "the frozen North is unlocking its arms to receive the fruits of our industry." The North, in his eyes, had countermanded the will of God.[44]

As for the prospect of developing an industrial base in the South, as Clay had suggested in his attempt to coax southern support for the measure, Mangum was not sanguine. Slave labor, he claimed, was "too careless" to be trusted with the intricate tasks associated with factory work. In addition, the South did not have the natural resources and transportation networks needed to manufacture goods and transport them to market. He went on to say that cavernous factories, like those in the North, would be unbearably hot during the southern summers. Finally, he said thankfully, the South lacked the "half-

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[44] Ibid., 5:541.

starved, beggared and dependent population," common to Northern ghettos and necessary to work the factories. His image of an exploitative, grasping, parasitic North, living off "wage slaves" and Southern farmers, reflected a sentiment common to the southern gentry.[45]

Keeping in mind his brother's admonition to keep clear and simple his references to the constitution, Willie Mangum stuck to a literal interpretation of the document, not once alluding to the complex theories of his hero, John Calhoun. Mangum conceded the constitutionality of protective tariffs. He contended, however, that they were only to be used as "temporary expedients" to combat the unfair trading practices of foreign nations.[46] Once said practices were rescinded the United States should resume a policy of free trade. The present system had not emerged from a trade war. This tariff, he said with derision, was designed to protect forty-year-old infant industries. As such, it was unconstitutional.[47] Any further application of the power to regulate trade carried with it dangerous consequences. Using Mangum's line of thought, the protectionist's argument, taken to its logical extreme, guaranteed the American government the right to regulate foreign trade out of existence. "For if you have the power to 'regulate commerce' for the purpose of protecting domestic manufacturing," Mangum cautioned, "you have the whole unrestrained

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[45] Ibid., 5:557-58.

[46] Ibid., 5:533.

[47] Ibid., 5:332-35.

power for that purpose, and to effectuate that purpose completely, you must push the power of regulation to - extinction."[48]

Lest he be confused with the very same sectionalists he had been condemning, Mangum declared that in the end all but the very wealthy suffer under the present system. Laborers in the North must pay more for life's necessities than if they could trade on the free market. Taxes imposed on imported goods are paid in by those who can least afford the added outlay. Manufacturers are enriched at the expense of their customers and the national treasury is expanded at the expense of liberty.[49] Unless they reform the tariff, Mangum warned, the republic will suffer and, perhaps, die. Wealth will become concentrated in the hands of the few and the state, with its coffers filled beyond need, will grow more powerful. He ended his speech by taking a stab at the president. The people of North Carolina, he stated, had been aware of Jackson's protectionist leanings since 1824 but accepted him nevertheless. "Loving him as we do, admiring him as we must, revering him as we ought, and confiding in him as we still delight to do, we, nevertheless always remembered his opinion on this subject with great regret."[50] But the Tariff Bill of 1832 seemed excessive and Mangum's words imply warning. The tariff was not an issue Mangum could take to his constituents to justify his break with the president. Nevertheless, he wanted Jackson to know that his patience was wearing thin and that the

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[48] Ibid., 5:524.

[49] Ibid., 5:522, 548-50.

[50] Ibid., 5:561.

president had to show his good faith or else Mangum would join the growing ranks of the opposition.

Mangum's address lasted five hours and was delivered over the course of two days. After he finished, he retreated to his room feeling "excited, feverish, & slightly indisposed." Modesty demanded that he remain subdued when reporting the event to his wife Charity. "I was not exactly pleased with my own effort," he wrote afterward. He did, however, allow the opinions of his colleagues speak for him. "I have reason to believe," he added, "that the universal opinion of the Senate is that it was eloquent & powerful."[51] Supporters elsewhere shared this opinion. "Your speech on the tariff," Warren County Justice of the Peace Francis Jones told the Senator, "[was] a bold & manly defense of Southern interests."[52] Condy Raguet, editor of the Philadelphia Banner, also liked the speech, so much so that he reprinted it. He too thought it "eloquent" and "manly."[53] Mangum made sure his words reached as wide an audience as possible by mailing free copies to all who asked. The police commissioner of Fayetteville, a retired Commoner, lawyers from Oxford and Hillsborough, indeed anyone who cared to read the speech received a transcription. In order to make the tariff a topic of public concern Mangum had to cultivate it carefully. This meant insuring that his version of the debate received the widest circulation.[54]

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[51] Ibid., 1:478.

[52] Ibid., 1:551.

[53] Ibid., 2:3.

[54] Ibid., 1:524, 527, 528, 529, 530, 570.

Mangum failed to convince everyone in his state that the tariff worked to their detriment. "I can assure you as far as my knowledge extends," John Long wrote from his home in Long Mills, North Carolina, "you are quite mistaken in supposing that the people of No. Ca. are so hostile to the tariff." The Randolph County farmer added that Mangum was mistaken to assume that the tariff injured the poor and insinuated that the Senator was out of touch and therefore unqualified to speak for them.[55] Like so many of his fellow Tar Heels, William Haywood, Jr. saw the debate as a contest between moderates who advocated "mutual concession" and nullificationists who would rather see the union dismembered than submit to compromise.[56]

Conflicting signals from home could very well have added to Mangum's sense of despair. As the session dragged into May and June, Mangum wondered if an agreement would ever be hammered out. On May 12, 1832, he informed his wife that both sides were paralyzed by fear, "apprehensive of the fatal consequences of a false movement on the subject."[57] Twelve days later he reported that the stalemate continued; the interminable session showed no sign of ending.[58] Curiously, he pictured an entirely different scene to Duncan Cameron. On the same day he wrote the second letter to his wife, Mangum told his old patron that the tariff would be modified in such a way as to "tranquilize . . . the excitement existing in the South." Congress, he stated with confidence, would adjourn on

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[55] Ibid., 1:531.

[56] Ibid., 1:554.

[57] Ibid., 1:545.

[58] Ibid., 1:546.

July 3 or 4.[59] The reasons for the disparities between one letter and the next are unclear, but the pattern of sad, forlorn letters between the two established early in the relationship may account for them. Whenever he sat down to write to his wife, he may very well have been overcome by the reality that he was so far from her, a reunion seemingly so far off in the distant future. Her pregnancy may also explain his melancholy, fearing as he did missing the birth of another child. After months of deliberation, Congress agreed to reduce the tariff to the 1824 levels. On July 14, 1832, President Jackson signed the bill into law. Breaking with the leader of his party, Mangum, along with many of his southern brethren, voted against the bill.[60] On July 12, 1832, Mangum raised his final objection on the floor of the Senate. "It is not enough that the revenue was reduced, for the bill carried out the odious principle of inequality," he said, recalling the populist tone of his February speech. "The rich would be indulged in their luxury without taxation, whilst the poor were heavily burdened." He understood that men had compromised their principles for the good of the Union to satisfy divergent economic and sectional interests. This he would not do, for the bill, as he saw it, set a precedent for protection. Even the relatively low rates of the 1832 measure had become abhorrent to the lapsed moderate. Stubborn and unyielding, his words reflect the passions unleashed over the previous six months. "Its principle," he finally said of the new tariff, "was to do evil, that good might result."[61]

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[59] Ibid., 1:548.

[60] Van Deusen, The Jacksonian Era, pp. 58-60.

[61] United States Congress, Register of Debates in Congress, 22nd Cong., 1 Sess., p. 1291.

Ignoring warnings from his friends and family, the Senator jumped ahead of public opinion. During the next year he would reign in his temper, pursue a middle course, and distance himself from John Calhoun and the nullifiers.

Jackson's victory in the presidential election of 1832 set off the second, more volatile stage of the tariff debate. Within days after the people of the nation had reelected the Tennessean, nullifiers in South Carolina assembled in the state capital to determine their response. Reacting to perceived threats from abolitionist movements in the North and lean economic times, the convention declared the Tariffs of 1828 and 1832 "null and void" within state limits, the measure to take effect on February 1, 1833. The proclamation unleased a fury throughout the nation and in the White House. Jackson responded at once. Despite private utterances about hanging Calhoun and his allies, he acted with calm deliberation. Sending reinforcements to two of the forts in Charleston Harbor and revenue cutters to patrol the port, the president also directed General Winfield Scott to plan a military riposte in case the South Carolinians escalated the conflict. The nullifiers made no offensive move, but refused to rescind their policy. The crisis deepened as leaders everywhere took sides. Uppermost were questions pertaining to sovereignty in a federal republic; specifically, where did it ultimately reside, who was supreme in cases involving conflicting interpretations of the constitution, and what recourse did individual states have in such disputes?[62]

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[62] Freehling, Prelude to Civil War, pp. ix-x, 1-2.

As a proponent of states rights, Mangum viewed the crisis with special interest. Generally, he sympathized with the anti-tariff ideals expressed by the conferees. He did not agree with their methods. On September 19, 1832, at a public meeting in Hillsborough, Mangum, responding to reports that he was a nullifier, forcefully repudiated the theory. Regardless, rivals branded him a nullifier.[63] Left unchecked, this allegation might have done irreparable harm to Mangum's political career. North Carolinians, by and large, vehemently opposed Calhoun's doctrine. Mangum and others had turned some Tar Heels against high tariffs, but that is where their hostility ended. Only in isolated pockets of western North Carolina, centered primarily in the town of Salisbury, was there any support for nullification. Elsewhere in the state, folks expressed little sympathy for the farmers to the south who had just begun to deal with the problems associated with declining soil fertility. Most farmers in North Carolina had lived with these uncertainties for generations. Fewer slaves also made them less apprehensive about abolitionism. Given this political climate, Mangum had to choose his words carefully as he commented on events in South Carolina and Washington, D.C.[64]

On December 10, 1832, Andrew Jackson issued his formal response to the nullifiers. The Proclamation to the People of South Carolina, written by Secretary of State Edward Livingston, seemed to be little more than a strongly-worded reprimand. The

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[63] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 1:581; 2:28; Hillsborough Recorder, 14 October 1832.

[64] Freehling, Prelude to Civil War, p. 204; Jeffrey, State Parties and National Politics, p. 39; Hoffman, Andrew Jackson and North Carolina Politics, p. 66; Western Carolinian (Salisbury), 1 October 1832.

administration, the fiat implied, would brook no compromise. It impugned the ordinance as "incompatible with the existence of the Union, contradicted expressly by the letter of the Constitution, unauthorized by its spirit, inconsistent with every principle on which it was founded, and destructive of the great object for which it was formed."[65] The nationalistic decree included phrasing that undermined the fundamental tenets of states rights philosophy. His threat to use everything within his power, including force if need be, to bring South Carolina to his point of view provoked outrage in some parts of the South. Reluctant converts to the president's creed, former Crawfordites like Mangum, for example, viewed this declaration as evidence that the General was poorly advised and as such, untrustworthy and unpredictable.[66] Jackson's call to arms did more to solidify opposition parties in North Carolina and across the South than had nullification. Mangum, however, was still unconvinced that the time had come to abandon the administration. Although suspicious of Jackson's motives, he nonetheless would not openly break with the hero. Privately, he did not try to contain his displeasure. Writing hastily by the light of a dying candle, he conveyed his thoughts to his wife. Again, the target of Mangum's recriminations was the cabinet, not the president. "The weak & foolish Cabinet of the

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[65] James D. Richardson, ed., A Compilation of the Messages and Papers of the Presidents, 1789-1902 11 vols. (New York: Bureau of National Literature and Art, 1903-1907), 2:643.

[66] Richardson, Messages and Papers, 2:640-656; Freehling, Prelude to Civil War, p. 267; Hoffman, Andrew Jackson and North Carolina Politics, pp. 63-64; Watson, Jacksonian Politics and Community Conflict, p. 130; Ellis, The Union at Risk, p. 85; McCormick, "Was There a 'Whig Strategy' in 1836?" p. 50; John Ashworth, "Agrarians" & "Aristocrats": Party Ideology in the United Sates, 1837-1846 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983), p. 238.

President has undone all the good that we hoped from his message," he wrote, suggesting knowledge of an earlier draft of the proclamation. "The proclamation," he concluded, "is violent & dangerous in its principles."[67] So distraught was he over the possibility of using force against his fellow southerners that he contemplated resigning from the Senate so as not to be a party to what he believed to be an appalling injustice.[68]

Like Mangum, the leading political figures in North Carolina chose to act with caution. Few dared to speak openly in favor of Calhoun's doctrine, Charles Fisher and James Iredell being the exceptions. Fewer still sanctioned Jackson's hard-line response. Most favored the path taken by the General Assembly.[69] On December 28, 1832, the upper chamber pronounced the doctrine of nullification "revolutionary in its character, subversive of the constitution, and leads to a dissolution of the Union."[70] The House of Commons used even harsher language in a resolution issued three days later. Denouncing nullification in the same words used by the Senate, members of the lower house went on to say that the present tariff was, "unwise, unequal in their operation, and oppressive to the Southern states." They instructed their representatives in the United States Senate to "procure a peaceable adjustment" to the crisis.[71] Conservatives in the legislature, of which

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[67] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 1:589.

[68] Ibid., 1:591.

[69] Jeffrey, State Parties and National Politics, p. 38; Ellis, The Union at Risk, p. 159.

[70] North Carolina, General Assembly, Journal of the Senate (Raleigh: State Printer, 1832), p. 99.

[71] North Carolina, General Assembly, Journal of the House of Commons (Raleigh: State Printer, 1832), pp. 224-25, 257.

there were many, had sounded their disapproval of protective tariffs, nullification, and the use of force without alienating the popular president or their old ally, John Calhoun. They had assumed the middle ground, refusing to countenance extremism on either side.

On January 16, 1833, Jackson drew Congress into his feud with South Carolina when his Revenue Collection Bill, a measure first outlined in his December 10 speech, was introduced to the House of Representatives and Senate. A request for supplementary military powers to collect import duties, detractors referred to the bill by the epithets, "Force" or "Bloody" Bill. After the message had been read into the official record, Senator Felix Grundy motioned that it be referred to the Judiciary Committee, one dominated by nationalists, protectionists, and friends of the president. Willie Mangum stood out as the lone member to exhibit empathy for the South Carolinians. Five days after receiving the bill, the Judiciary Committee made its report to the full Senate. As expected, the body recommended it as submitted.[72] The next day, January 22, 1833, Mangum made an appeal as the only member of the committee to oppose the use of force. Seeking to delay consideration of the bill, Mangum informed the Senate that he was ill and asked that they adjourn until he was well enough to make a speech. Three Senators rose to protest Mangum's request, which was summarily denied.[73] Failing an indefinite postponement, he implored his colleagues to "deliberate slowly and cautiously," certain that granting Jackson the authority to use military force would "shake the ancient character

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[72] Ellis, The Union at Risk, pp. 160-62; Van Deusen, The Jacksonian Era, p. 75.

[73] Claude G. Bowers, Party Battles of the Jackson Period (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1922), pp. 271-72.

of our institutions to their very foundations." The measure, he added, "carried out too fully the principles of the old Federalist Party and contained much that was odious and dangerous to republican liberty." He stood against the administration not as a nullifier, but as a defender of the rights of the states against federal tyranny. "Any power not specifically delegated to the federal government," he argued in a classic states rights vein, "are reserved for the state."[74]

When supporters again moved to begin debate on the bill, Mangum tried once more to kill it. On January 28, he called for a vote on the question of tabling the Force Bill. The motion put southern unity to a test. Administration forces lined up against an array of nullifiers and states rights men who, although opposed to nullification, stood with South Carolina in her battle against the tariff. The Jackson stalwarts won by a vote of 30 to 15 and the debate was slated to begin February 1. Thirteen of the fifteen votes against the bill, however, came from Southern Senators, giving hope to proponents of regional unity.[75] Mangum did not see it that way. "I fear we shall make war upon [South Carolina]," he wrote Charity the day after debate had begun.[76]

Onlookers in Washington watched a "war of giants" unfold as the Senate debated the Force Bill. Calhoun, Clay, and Daniel Webster were all expected to take the floor. One contemporary added Mangum's name to this list of "giants," a sign of the North

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[74] United States Congress, Register of Debates in Congress, 22nd Cong., 2 Sess., pp. 174-175.

[75] Ellis, The Union at Risk, p. 162.

[76] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 2:18.

Carolinians own notoriety.[77] As the Senate argued over Jackson's "stick," Clay fashioned a "carrot," in the form of a new tariff, acceptable to Calhoun and his followers. Clay and Calhoun met privately to hammer out the details of the new tariff. The only other person in attendance was their mutual friend and principal go-between, Willie Mangum. After the meeting Calhoun gave Clay some breathing room by suspending his ordinance until Congress finished debating the Kentuckian's recommendations. On February 12, Clay introduced his compromise bill. It proposed gradually reduced rates on protected items over a span of ten years. By 1842, Clay projected, the highest rates would not exceed twenty percent. Southerners welcomed the concessions and many, including Mangum, took an active role plugging the bill in both houses of Congress. All that remained was for Congress to figure out if Jackson should use a carrot, a stick, or both, in dealing with South Carolina. A heavy-handed approach promised to please nationalists and protectionists in the North and East but would have frightened off his friends in the South. The debates that month, therefore, promised to have far-reaching consequences for party alignments throughout the nation.[78]

As unpopular as nullification was with most people outside South Carolina, it was little wonder that the Senate voted to pass the Revenue Collection (or Force) Bill by a vote

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[77] (unnamed) Campbell to James Campell, 24 January 1833, Special Collections, Duke University Library, Durham, North Carolina.

[78] The terms "carrot" and "stick" have been used to describe the compromise tariff of 1833 and Force Bill, respectively, in Van Deusen, The Jacksonian Era, pp. 73-78; W. Edwin Hemphill et al., eds., The Papers of John C. Calhoun, 20 vols. (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1959-1991), 16:319-324; Freehling, Prelude to Civil War, pp. 2-3, 292-93.

of 32 to one on February 20, 1833. Only John Tyler, a rigid states rights doctrinaire from Virginia, went on record as opposing the popular legislation. Many southern Senators, including Willie Mangum and Bedford Brown of North Carolina, abstained in an agreement whereby Northern opponents of the new tariff would withhold their votes when the time came to vote on that bill. That day came for the House of Representatives on February 26, when Clay's compromise tariff passed 119 to 85 with nearly unanimous support from the South and strong opposition from the Northeast, notably New England. Senators seconded the will of the House on March 1, passing the new tariff by a vote of 29 in favor and 16 against. The regional split in the House carried over into the Senate vote. Mangum voted with the majority.[79] On the day of the vote he praised the actions of Clay, who had just been redeemed in his eyes. "I rose," he said from his desk in the Senate chamber, "to return my thanks to my honorable friends, through whose zealous efforts this glorious consummation has been brought about." Clay, he continued, had "restore[d] peace and harmony to the country," and should receive therefore "the deep and lasting gratitude of [his] fellow citizens."[80] A rift between friends created by one tariff had been mended by another.

On March 2, 1833, Andrew Jackson signed both bills into law. The crisis had passed without bloodshed, an outcome Mangum had once thought likely. But the

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[79] Van Deusen, The Jacksonian Era, pp. 77-78; Freehling, Prelude to Civil War, p. 293; Ellis, The Union at Risk, p. 171.

[80] United States Congress, Register of Debates in Congress, 22nd Cong., 2 Sess., p. 800.

president's plan to broaden his base of support by enacting a moderately protective tariff palatable to New England, a plan that began with the Tariff of 1828 and continued with the Tariff of 1832, had backfired. Southern Democrats felt cheated, abandoned by a man they had once called their own. In North Carolina the pattern was the same. Clay had emerged a hero. Every member of the state delegation in Washington supported his compromise tariff. Press and public hailed him as a savior. Jackson, on the other hand, had lost the support of many states rights moderates in North Carolina. Along with the supporters of John Branch, who had abandoned the General after the cabinet realignment, these people comprised a sizable opposition movement. Jackson would never regain his lock hold on the voters of the Old North State.[81]

By way of contrast, Willie Mangum continued to enjoy broad support at home. The election of his brother Priestly to the State Senate in 1832 added to Willie's influence with state and local politicians. He kept in close touch with these men, advising them on national issues, listening to their ideas about state politics, and campaigning for those seeking office. His ties to state railroad developers and bankers strengthened during the years 1832 and 1833. Still opposed to federally funded internal improvements projects, he did support efforts to finance railroad construction using state money in North Carolina.

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[81] Peter B. Knupfer, The Union as It Is: Constitutional Unionism and Sectional Compromise, 1787-1861 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991), p. 104; Van Deusen, The Jacksonian Era, p. 79; Ellis, The Union at Risk, p. ix; Hoffman, Andrew Jackson and North Carolina Politics, pp. 45, 65, 67-68, 116; Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, I:475; Hoffman, "John Branch," p. 314.

In the Fall of 1833, he attended an internal improvements convention in Hillsborough, further proof of his desire to expand the base of the state economy.[82]

Still Mangum remained, at least in public statements, loyal to Jackson. By the end of 1833, he counted himself among his backers. This, however, would soon change. Jackson's fight over the tariff and, more importantly, his truculent handling of the nullifiers, diminished the General in the eyes of Mangum, pushing him in the direction of the opposition. His battle with the Second Bank of the United States placed Mangum firmly in that fold. Not one to jettison friends easily, Willie Mangum would stay with Jackson until he began to believe that the President no longer acted in the best interests of the republic. Mangum could also see that his constituents, the lifeblood of his career, had grown suspicious of the General and his handpicked heir, Martin Van Buren. Answering the calls of both principle and pragmatism, Mangum would renounce his leader within a year of the compromise tariff vote after Jackson declared war on the National Bank.[83]

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[82] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 1:420, 427, 449-50, 446-49, 461, 499, 508, 550, 558, 586; 2:5, 9-10, 22, 36; United States Congress, Register of Debates in Congress, 22nd Cong., 1 Sess., pp. 953, 1282; Carolyn A. Daniel, "David Lowry Swain, 1801-1835," (Ph. D. dissertation, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, 1954), p. 314.

[83] William W. Freehling, The Road to Disunion: Secessionists at Bay, 1776-1854 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), p. 296.

CHAPTER 6
ANTIPARTY PARTISAN

On February 5, 1834, Daniel Webster read into the official record a report critical of the administration's policy of removing federal deposits from the Bank of the United States and placing the funds in various state banks. After one of Webster's allies moved that the Senate print six thousand additional copies of the Finance Committee report, several Jacksonians rose in protest. Willie Mangum used this outburst to make public a fact his most intimate associates had known for months: He had lost confidence in the administration and wished to sever his ties with Jackson. But first Mangum had to refocus the issue in a way that would win the sympathy of a constituency largely indifferent to the fate of the Bank of the United States. "The question is not, nor never was, 'bank or no bank,'" he admonished the protesters, "the question was emphatically 'law or no law - constitution or no constitution.'"[1] Three weeks later, he again spoke before the full Senate, this time on the pretext of introducing another in a series of petitions from citizens in North Carolina protesting the removal of deposits. Again, Mangum invoked the popular theme of law and order. Now he added a second— antipartyism. "The whole struggle here," he told the Senate, "is to take public money from the place designated by

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[1] United States Congress, Register of Debates in Congress, 23rd Cong., 1st sess., pp. 472-473; See also, ibid., p. 467 and, appendix, pp. 146-56.

law, and give the use of it to certain affiliated banks, that must, of necessity, be more or less controlled by a political party."[2] The General's lawlessness, Mangum concluded, was an unavoidable consequence of his partisanship. Over the next decade he would repeat the themes of antipartyism and law and order in nearly every statement he made about his rivals. The break was final. With his defection, Mangum brought the prestige of the United States Senate to his state's anti-Jackson movement. His talents and political connections helped transform it from a minority to a majority party. To achieve these, however, he and his confederates had to convince voters to set aside their hostility to partisanship, while they themselves continued to condemn parties as unrepublican. Ultimately, Mangum and his allies would establish a party founded on a paradox: an organization opposed to organizing, managed by politicians doling out patronage for the sake of ridding the government of "spoilsmen," in sum, a political party ostensibly dedicated to the eradication of political parties.

The war between Andrew Jackson and the Second Bank of the United States began long before Mangum sounded his disapproval of administration policy. Shortly after he assumed the presidency in 1829, Jackson confided to a friend that he planned to revamp the Bank. The new Chief Executive held conservative views of banking and currency, and he steadfastly opposed cheap credit and paper money. More importantly, he believed that the Bank and its president, Nicholas Biddle, exercised too much power, and that Biddle had used the influence of the Bank against Jackson during the presidential election

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[2] Henry Thomas Shanks, ed., The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 5 vols. (Raleigh: State Department of Archives and History, 1950-1956), 5:568.

campaign of 1828. Bowing to pressure from his pro-Bank allies in the North, especially Pennsylvania, Jackson restrained his impulse to destroy the institution outright. Instead, he would allow its charter to expire, at which time he would propose a replacement, tied directly to the United States Treasury with no power to issue notes or make loans. The charter was to expire in 1836. Aware of Jackson's intentions and the delicate ties he had to the North, the National Republicans, led by Henry Clay and Daniel Webster, conspired with Biddle to force the issue in time for the presidential election of 1832. Accordingly, on March 13, 1832, Clay introduced to the Senate a bill to recharter the Bank with only modest alterations to its existing form.[3]

Before Clay submitted the Recharter Bill, Thomas Cadwalader, a close associate of Biddle, surveyed members of the Senate to learn the mood of the body as it related to the Bank. He found general support for the bill, but identified ten men likely to oppose it if it were to come to a vote in 1832. Among those who would rather the Bank question be deferred until after the election was Willie Mangum.[4] His statements about the Bank and its recharter betray an ambivalence reconciled only by his penchant for expediency.

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[3] For the best general account of the "Bank War" see, Bray Hammond, Banks and Politics in America: From the Revolution to the Civil War, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957), pp. 326-420; See also, Glyndon G. Van Deusen, The Jacksonian Era: 1828-1848, (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1959), pp. 62-65; Robert V. Remini, "Election of 1832," in Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., Fred L. Israel, and William P. Hansen, eds., History of American Presidential Elections: 1789-1968, 4 vols. (New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1971), 1:499-500.

[4] Claude G. Bowers, Party Battles in the Jackson Period, (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1922), pp. 210-11; Thomas Payne Govan, Nicholas Biddle: Nationalist and Public Banker, 1786-1844, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1959), p. 166.

On January 19, 1832, he confided to William Gaston, who was in Raleigh at the time, that he "regretted that the U.S. Bank has come before Congress this session." Although Mangum considered "the continuance of that institution as of almost indispensable necessity," he did not want to defy public opinion, which remained pro-Jackson. Postponing recharter till the next session, Mangum believed, would enable proponents to redraft the bill to conform to Jackson's specifications. Mangum thought this highly unlikely, however, for the General and his opponents, he observed, were engaged in a battle of wills, and neither showed a desire to yield.[5]

Mangum surmised correctly the will of his constituency when he decided to side with the President on the recharter question. North Carolinians, like their representative in the Senate, had mixed feelings about the Bank. It did offer much needed paper currency to a state chronically short of money, as some leading Tar Heels pointed out. James Iredell informed Mangum "that the Bank is at this time very popular in our state - I believe, indeed I know, it has done us vast good and as yet we have felt no evils from it."[6] Duncan Cameron thought a centralized banking system an asset, not only to the people of North Carolina, but to the nation as a whole.[7] Planters, speculators, and others

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[5] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 1:455-56; Edith Josephine Houston, "The Bank of the United States and Willie P. Mangum," (M.A. thesis, Appalachian State Teachers College, 1960), p. 1.

[6] Elizabeth S. Hoyt, "Reactions in North Carolina to Jackson's Banking Policy, 1829-1832," North Carolina Historical Review 25 (1948):170; Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 1:472.

[7] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 1:549.

engaged in the market economy profited from low-cost loans and stock dividends paid by the Bank. Mangum did not ignore these important constituents. On March 19, 1832, disregarding his own position, he submitted a petition signed by "a large number of the inhabitants of Granville County" demanding the Bank be rechartered.[8] More often than not, however, he acted on behalf of the majority. Small farmers, by far the largest portion of his constituency, generally shared Jackson's preference for specie, silver and gold, over inflationary paper notes. Gold mining operations in western North Carolina made hard currency popular there. The Salisbury Western Carolinian even proclaimed that the Bank was unconstitutional, a cry made familiar by Nathaniel Macon, who had opposed the Bank throughout his forty-year career. To be sure, the Bank of the United States had gained popularity in North Carolina since the days of Nathaniel Macon. Still, Mangum knew that the public was not going to turn against Jackson over this issue.[9]

As the battle intensified, Mangum began to size up the strength of the combatants. "Almost the whole of the South will, in the Senate, be opposed," he informed William Polk, predicting that only Louisiana's and Alabama's two Senators and one each from

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[8] Quoted in, Hoyt, "Reactions in North Carolina to Jackson's Banking Policy," p. 169.

[9] Hoyt, "Reactions in North Carolina to Jackson's Banking Policy," pp. 170-73; Arthur C. Cole, The Whig Party in the South, (Washington, D.C.: American Historical Association, 1913), pp. 25-26; Herbert Dale Pegg, The Whig Party in North Carolina, (Chapel Hill: Colonial Press, 1968), pp. 7-8; William E. Dodd, The Life of Nathaniel Macon, (Raleigh: Edwards & Broughton, 1903), p. 383; Max R. Williams, "The Foundations of the Whig Party in North Carolina: A Synthesis and a Modest Proposal," North Carolina Historical Review 47 (1970):118; Edward Pessen, Jacksonian America: Society, Personality, and Politics, (Rev. ed. Homewood Ill.: The Dorsey Press, 1978), p. 230.

North Carolina and Georgia would vote to recharter the Bank. He was only partly correct: just three Southern Senators ultimately supported the Bank.[10] His imperfect powers of observation included more than just an ability to tally votes. Mangum exhibited a keen knowledge of the personalities he dealt with in Washington. He saw, for example, that the Bank question had gone well beyond a simple matter of public policy, taking on a deeply personal dimension. Jackson, he told Polk, "may regard [the recharter battle] as a trial of strength between his popularity & that of the institution - he will not shrink from the contest."[11] Mangum well understood well the president's caste of mind. He knew that he was not a man to trifle with. Jackson would do anything he could to defeat the Bank. "The United States Bank question . . . is now before the Congress," Mangum wrote Cameron just before the bill came up for its final vote, predicting, correctly this time, that it "will pass both branches - I think it will be vetoed."[12]

As Mangum divined, the Bill cleared in both houses of Congress. On June 11, and then again on July 3, the Senate and House, respectively, voted to pass Clay's Bank rechartering bill. Both Senator Mangum and his colleague, Senator Bedford Brown of North Carolina, voted with the minority against passage. Nine of the thirteen members of the North Carolina contingent in the House of Representatives joined Mangum, Brown,

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[10] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 1:481; William J. Cooper, Jr., The South and the Politics of Slavery, 1828-1856, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1978), p. 50.

[11] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 1:481.

[12] Ibid., 1:548.

and, more importantly, the president. The President vetoed the bill on July 10, 1832, which the opposition failed to override. Still, they could claim a moral victory. Clay and Webster had succeeded in making the Bank a partisan issue that proved almost as weighty as Jackson's character. During the presidential election of 1832, National Republicans portrayed the president as a reckless usurper who had crippled a valued institution and trampled on the Constitution in the process. Jackson rejoined with allegations that the Bank demoralized republican society by injecting into the democratic process the power of money and the influence of the speculators and commercial interests. He now asserted that the Bank was unconstitutional and privately vowed to destroy it. While the battle over rechartering the Bank and the subsequent veto did little to define national alliances, the president's next move in the Bank war, removing the deposits, would clarify them beyond doubt.[13]

In November 1832, Jackson began his final assault on the Second Bank of the United States. He reported to his cabinet that he believed the Bank to be in danger of collapse and urged that they begin the process of removing government funds at once. Next, he asked the House of Representatives to investigate. It did so in March 1833,

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[13] Hoyt, "Reactions in North Carolina to Jackson's Banking Policy," pp. 167, 169, 174; Pegg, The Whig Party in North Carolina, p. 8; Remini, "Election of 1832," pp. 498, 500, 509, 511; James D. Richardson, ed., A Compilation of the Messages and Papers of the Presidents, 1789-1902 11 vols. (New York: Bureau of National Literature and Art, 1903-1907), 2:576-91; Robert E. Shalhope, "Thomas Jefferson's Republicanism and Antebellum Southern Thought," Journal of Southern History 42 (1976):544; David J. Russo, "The Major Political Issues of the Jacksonian Period and the Development of Party Loyalty in Congress, 1830-1840," Transactions of the American Philosophical Society 62 (1972):30-31.

concluding that the Bank was in fact a secure repository for the government's funds. Nonetheless, Jackson ordered Secretary of the Treasury Louis McLane to withdraw the deposits and place them elsewhere. McLane refused, citing congressional opposition as his reason. Jackson then reassigned McLane to the State Department, a move he had been contemplating for some time, and replaced him with William J. Duane. He too balked, pointing to the House report and telling Jackson that the state banks chosen by his administration were even more tenuous and unstable than the central facility. Again Jackson refused to heed advice. Attorney General Roger B. Taney, who had first advised the president to remove the funds, then replaced Duane in September 1833. As Secretary of the Treasury, Taney paid government expenses with capital drawn from the Second Bank of the United States but placed none of its new revenue there. Instead, the so-called "pet banks," several state institutions selected by the administration and located in major cities, collected the funds. During the winter of 1833-34, Jackson accelerated the process by removing the deposits outright.[14]

Commercial interests in the Northeast reacted angrily to the president's policy and anti-administration politicians from the region warned of the dire consequences that would accompany the decentralization of the banking system. Jackson had never been as popular with Northern voters as he had been in the South and West. Now he was vilified as never before. Differences among his opponents, however, continued to forestall efforts at party

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[14] Hammond, Banks and Politics in America, pp. 412-19; Van Deusen, The Jacksonian Era, 80-84; Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., The Age of Jackson, (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1945), pp. 97-102.

building. John Quincy Adams seemed amazed by the diversity of the anti-Jacksonians in the North. Antimasons, Federalists, and disenchanted Democrats from Pennsylvania and elsewhere, each with their own philosophies, local identities, and leaders, filled the growing ranks of the opposition. Only their fear of Jackson and his likely heir, Martin Van Buren, held them together. The two, northern opponents declared, willfully violated the law when they went after the Bank, an institution worthy of recharter.[15]

The outcry in the South was very different. Leaders there knew that the Bank itself had few friends, so they focused instead on legal and constitutional questions raised by removal, specifically that of "executive usurpation." The complaint brought together nationalists and advocates of states rights, who agreed that Jackson and Taney had acted without Congressional consent when they removed funds from the Bank. And by so doing, they concluded, the president had breached the authority mandated him in the Constitution. Henry Clay added that Jackson now commanded an even deeper reservoir of patronage through his control of the "pet" banks, suggesting this would foster even more corruption. Willing to back Jackson on the question of rechartering the Bank and remaining in his corner after the veto, Southern leaders like Mangum felt he had gone too far by removing the deposits. They interpreted his policy as augmenting the power of the

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[15] Thomas Brown, Politics and Statesmanship: Essays on the American Whig Party, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1975), pp. 157-58; Pessen, Jacksonian America, pp. 201-202.

federal government at the expense of the states. For Mangum and tens of thousands other states rights men in the South, this proved to be unforgivable.[16]

When the senate reconvened in December 1833, opponents of the administration moved quickly to take command of the all the key leadership positions. In what proved to be their first test of solidarity, they voted to make committee assignment elective. Prior to the time, the power to appoint committees was vested in the president pro tempore, Hugh Lawson White, a Democrat. Having won that round, opposition forces began the process of filling these posts. Anticipating a raucous session, Calhoun refused all assignments so he would be free to devote all his energy to floor battles. Acting on the same premise, Clay agreed to serve only on the relatively minor Committee on Public Lands. Webster took charge of the Committee on Finance, the body expected to lead the attack against Jackson. Made up to reflect the ideological and regional diversity of the opposition, the committee included three northerners -- Webster, Thomas Ewing of Ohio, and William Wilkens of Pennsylvania -- and two southerners -- John Tyler of Virginia and Willie Mangum. Of the five, only Wilkens remained firmly in Andrew Jackson's fold.[17] Mangum liked working with Webster, even though the two often disagreed on matters of

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[16] Cole, The Whig Party in the South, p. 27, 281-82; Williams, "The Foundations of the Whig Party in North Carolina," p. 119; Brown, Politics and Statesmanship, pp. 157-58; Harry L. Watson, Jacksonian Politics and Community Conflict: The Emergence of the Second Party System in Cumberland County North Carolina, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1981), p. 160; Harry L. Watson, Liberty and Power: The Politics of Jacksonian America, (New York: Hill and Wang, 1990), p. 156-57.

[17] Charles M. Wiltse, John C. Calhoun, Nullifier, 1829-1839, (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1949), pp. 212-13; Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 2:55-56.

policy. Gradually, however, Mangum came to respect both the man and his opinions. "My committee duties bring me into almost daily intercourse with Mr. Webster," he wrote of his new companion, "I meet with no gentleman who seems so deeply impressed with a sense of impending general disaster." Frequent exchanges with the chairman clearly influenced Mangum's thinking about the Bank and its role in the national economy and drove him further still from the party of Jackson.[18]

The time had come for the reluctant Jacksonian to break with his leader. Beginning in December 1833, Willie Mangum wrote a series of long letters to his closest friends and sympathetic officials in North Carolina delineating his new stand. In effect these were the nineteenth-century equivalents to modern position papers. Despite bold lettering across the top of many blazoning their confidentiality, these notes were probably intended for a wide audience. "I hope you will show this hasty letter to no one," Mangum wrote newspaper editor John Beard of the Salisbury Western Carolinian, "I should be ashamed of the literary execution." As if giving Beard permission to make the contents known, he added, "the principles contained in it are free to the world."[19]

On December 22, 1833, Mangum sent the first of these letters to Governor David L. Swain. Before March 1833, the two had had little contact. Swain came to the office of governor in 1832, a proponent of tax revision, public education, reforming the state constitution, and railroad construction. Urging Mangum to take a greater role in state

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[18] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 2:75-76.

[19] Ibid., 2:218; Mangum wrote several such letters during the years 1833 and 1834. In additional to the selections cited below see, 2:240-47.

politics, Swain accompanied the Senator in the Fall of 1833 to an internal improvements convention held in Hillsborough. Mangum had campaigned for Swain's brother-in-law, Daniel Barringer, who repaid the kindness by bringing him closer to Swain. With his December letter to Swain, Mangum entered a secret pact with the Governor. Together, Mangum and Swain, along with John Branch, would unite diverse elements of the opposition in North Carolina.[20]

"The present state of parties, and the great results that may be achieved by the efforts of this Winter, & knowing that those efforts on the part of the Kitchen are prodigious lead to this communication."[21] So began Mangum's long journey into the opposition camp. His communique sketched the events of the past session and their probable consequences, ending with predictions for the next presidential election. Mangum defined himself as a moderate, an independent determined to "check the . . . absolute power" of Jackson and his allies.[22] He announced that he would take the middle ground between nullification and nationalism, the two poles upon which Jacksonian editors disdainfully placed their enemies. Misconceptions such as these, Mangum observed,

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[20] Carolyn A. Daniel, "David Lowry Swain, 1801-1835," (Ph. D. dissertation, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, 1954), p. 434-35; Harold J. Counihan, "The North Carolina Constitutional Convention of 1835: A Study in Jacksonian Democracy," North Carolina Historical Review 46 (1969):357; Houston, "The Bank of the United States and Willie P. Mangum," p. 55; Burton W. Folsom II, "Party Formation & Development in Jacksonian America: The Old South," Journal of American Studies 7 (1973):222.

[21] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 2:51.

[22] Ibid., 2:55.

would be the greatest obstacle to forming an anti-administration party in his home state.[23] Besides, he went on, the General remained an immensely popular figure in the South and any attack on him may well be political suicide. Still, Mangum wrote, "my course is taken - I shall give cordial support, where I can to the admn.: But I shall also give what aid I can to the exposure of abuses."[24] He closed by giving Swain permission to share his letter with "friends or candid men" as he saw fit.[25]

For all his pretensions about safeguarding democracy and putting a stop to executive tyranny, Mangum expressed a second, more practical motive for writing Swain. If they entertained any hope of forming an alternative to the Democratic Party in North Carolina, he told the Governor, then they had to find an issue around which they could rally the masses. At the time, the state House of Commons was debating a resolution that, if passed, would have instructed their Senators in Washington to do everything within their power to recharter the Bank. Both Mangum and Swain knew this bill would not get through the House. It never did. "The naked question of recharter is much weaker, I presume, than the Deposite question - the battle should be fought on the latter," Mangum figured. Still, the Bank would not do: It was too unpopular and too complex. After considering his options and examining public opinion at home, he discovered an alternative.[26]

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[23] Ibid., 2:52-55.

[24] Ibid., 2:55.

[25] Ibid., 2:56.

[26] Ibid., 2:53.

On December 10, 1833, Henry Clay presented a bill to the Senate that would allow for the distribution of the proceeds of public land sales to the states. Special consideration, in the form of additional revenue, would be accorded those states from which that land came. Now, Mangum argued, was the time to unite behind Clay and his popular measure. This vote, he advised the Governor, should be the test of party unity for the newly-formed opposition movement. Ultimately, the plan worked: Distribution became a central tenet of the Whig Party in North Carolina. At the time he wrote this letter to Swain, however, Mangum had some difficulty with the distribution question. Twice before he had voted against similar bills on the grounds, he claimed, that the tariff issue needed to be settled first. Now that that was done, he could vote for distribution with a clear conscience. Mangum knew that if he changed his stand he would be assailed for inconsistency. So he requested that Swain "instruct" him to vote for the Clay Bill. Mangum had acknowledged the right of state officials to instruct United States senators to vote a given way. This gesture would soon come back to haunt him.[27]

Swain welcomed Mangum into the fold, happy to have a person possessed of his "conversational talent." Mangum's ability to sway "public men with respect to national politics" would serve the alliance well he thought.[28] Privately, he confided to Charles L. Hinton that Mangum had overstated his case against the president. "The Governor . . .

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[27] Ibid., 2:53-54; Pegg, The Whig Party in North Carolina, pp. 20-25; William S. Hoffman, "Willie P. Mangum and the Whig Revival of the Doctrine of Instructions," The Journal of Southern History 22 (1956):341-42.

[28] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 2:58.

favoured me with a perusal of your letter," Hinton informed Mangum, "he says your skin is too thin," an indication that Swain saw the battle with Jackson as an ordinary power struggle, not the great ideological contest Mangum had described. Mangum's former classmate added that he planned to attend a New Year's Eve gala at the governor's mansion the next evening. The guest list, he added, included more than five hundred names. Doubtless, news of the senator's defection would spread quickly through this crowd.[29] A second fellow alumni, Stephen K. Sneed praised Mangum, assuring him that three-quarters of the people in Granville County felt as he did.[30] Orange County Democrat William Montgomery, however, did not. He thought Mangum had turned against the constituents who had sent him to the Senate. "Have you gone over to our enemies?" he asked Mangum soon after he had written his letter to Swain.[31]

In letters dated February 7 and 24, 1834, Mangum reiterated to Duncan Cameron much of what he had said to Swain. Expressing little faith in the ability of the pet banks to provide a stable currency, he had grown even more pessimistic about the economy. A crisis loomed, he warned Cameron, refusing to give credence to the "impractical & chimerical scheme of returning to hard money altogether."[32] Spiraling inflation and loss of public confidence were all they could expect from the policies of Jackson and Van Buren. Their economic agenda, he believed, was little more than a bid to seize more

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[29] Ibid., 2:62.

[30] Ibid., 2:68.

[31] Ibid., 2:59.

[32] Ibid., 2:73.

opportunities for patronage. Mangum had recast the hero. Ignorant, coarse, vulgar, Jackson fostered corruption at all levels of government.[33] The senator proposed a solution to this mess: a democratic uprising directed by Southern patriots backing Henry Clay. "The north has been so thoroughly corrupted by the patronage of the Executive, that it is wholly incapable of making resistance." Only Massachusetts, home to Daniel Webster, seemed capable of resisting the urge to openly bid for political patronage.[34]

Mangum had again raised the issues of executive tyranny and the spoils of office. Virtue, by his estimate, was the exclusive province of the South. He continued to speak of the moral decay of the administration as if it were evident to all. Jackson had become corrupted by northern influences, so much so that he was now hostile to the South. Mangum viewed it as his mission to spread the word of the president's apostasy. But how? Writing letters to the social, economic, and political elite was in and of itself insufficient in a democracy. He needed to win over the public. To do that he would have to tap into existing discontent over administration policy and magnify it out of all proportion. Thousands of North Carolinians challenged the president's right to withdraw deposits from the Bank without congressional approval and several groups presented the Senator with petitions demanding that Jackson restore the funds to the Bank. Long before

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[33] Ibid., 2:101.

[34] Ibid., 2:74.

the first of these crossed his desk, Mangum had decided to break with the administration. The petitions enabled him to claim a popular mandate for a position he already held.[35]

On January 23, 1834, Mangum introduced the first of these petitions to the United States Senate. The document, signed by "sundry citizens of North Carolina," protested the removal of the deposits and demanded the full reinstatement of the Bank of the United States. Upon submitting the memorial, Mangum sounded a personal note. He said he knew many of the signatories and could "testify to their respectability and intelligence."[36] By the time the session came to a close, Mangum would submit more than a dozen such memorials.[37] They arrived from every section of the state, sometimes from town or village assemblies, more frequently from county-wide meetings. On occasion he presented more than one a day. Late in the session, Bedford Brown, North Carolina's other Senator and a Jackson loyalist, began offering petitions rebutting Mangum's. In April, Brown entered one drawn up by citizens in Tarborough, Edgecombe County, praising Jackson and his policies. Unfazed, Mangum challenged the accuracy of the document, claiming personal knowledge of the people of Edgecombe and their true political leanings, adding confidently that once they understood the magnitude of Jackson's sins they would see the error of their

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[35] Ibid., 2:76-77.

[36] United States Congress, The Congressional Globe, 23rd. Congress, 1st. session, p. 122.

[37] Ibid., pp. 198, 216, 251, 264, 278, 301, 333, 396; United States Congress, Register of Debates in Congress, 23rd Cong., 1st sess., pp. 529, 1140, 1205-06, 1767-69.

ways and return to the opposition fold.[38] The following month brought two conflicting petitions from Wake County alone. Mangum argued that Brown's represented the work "of eighteen gentlemen of the county of Wake," while the one he had submitted accurately depicted the will of "four-fifths of the voters of Raleigh."[39]

Individuals also wrote Mangum to protest Jackson's policies. Samuel Hillman, of Morganton, told of local mortgage foreclosures and falling produce prices resulting from the contraction of credit.[40] James Lea, a shopkeeper residing in Caswell County, attested to the positive impact the Bank of the United States had had on "the whole mercantile class of the community" and denounced withdrawal as an abuse of presidential power.[41] Rightly or wrongly, these men ascribed the downturn in the local economy to Jackson. Conversely, Priestly Mangum focused on the principles being subordinated in the war between Jackson and the Bank. On February 20, 1834, the younger Mangum wrote that all involved had been demeaned by the process. Willie's only option, as he saw it, was to decide between two evils. He lamented that "this world is awfully governed by money," as if advising Willie to give in to the inevitable. "We are all bought & sold to that influence by the force of our necessities. - The power of money is the ascendant in [North Carolina] at this time; and I suppose your course will be approved by a majority

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[38] United States Congress, Register of Debates in Congress, 23rd Cong., 1st sess., pp. 1259-60.

[39] Ibid., pp. 1767-69.

[40] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 2:81-83.

[41] Ibid., 2:96-98.

for awhile." And so, he reasoned, Willie should continue to declare loudly and repeatedly his enmity for Jackson. "Most persons think that Genl. Jackson has acted unwisely, rashly & perhaps unlawfully in removing the deposites; I think so too," Priestly wrote. In the end, the younger Mangum believed that Jackson's means, as objectionable as they seemed, justified the end. For all his alleged infractions against the Constitution, the president had brought about the demise of an all too powerful and corrupting institution.[42] Willie Mangum was not as hostile to the Bank as his brother and still recognized the salubrious effect it had the state economy. Yet, he did not disregard the counsel of his most trusted advisor.

Early in February 1834, Mangum proposed that the removal debate did not concern whether or not the Bank would continue in its present form. Rather the issue, according to Mangum, was "law or no law - constitution or no constitution."[43] At the time he took his stand, Mangum was not prepared to make a full-length speech formalizing his break with Jackson. The petitions, letters of support from voters back home, and his brother's admonition, convinced the Senator that the time had come. On February 11, he submitted a petition drawn up at a public meeting in Burke County. This "large and respectable body of . . . citizens" from the western part of the state decried the "pecuniary embarrassments and deranged state of the currency of the country, which they attribute to the removal of public deposits from the Bank of the United States." The petitioners demanded the

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[42] Ibid., 2:88-90.

[43] United States Congress, Register of Debates in Congress, 23rd Cong., 1st sess., pp. 472-73.

"immediate restoration of the deposites to that institution."[44] Mangum freely editorialized as he read the affidavit to the Senate. The residents of Burke County, he declared, had been some of the most faithful Jacksonians in his state. These people - "the best friends of the Executive" - now refused to stand by and watch him destroy the economy. True to form, Mangum laced his sermon with denunciations of partisanship and factionalism. "The destinies of the country are held by one man, sustained by an organized party," deaf to the pleas of the people for whom the nation had been founded.[45] The brief address represented Willie Mangum at his rhetorical best. Henry Clay, for one, found him quite convincing. Three days after Mangum read the memorial into the record, Clay backed the North Carolinian's motion that it be printed and sent to committee.[46]

Mangum was ready to launch a more virulent attack on the president. On February 25, 1834, he introduced another petition protesting the removal of deposits from the Bank, this one signed by one hundred citizens from New Bern, North Carolina.[47] Then he motioned that the Senate renew consideration of the Burke County resolutions. This set off a storm of protest from the other side of the aisle. Mangum countered with an extended discourse on the so-called crimes of the administration. He lambasted Jackson and his adherents as unprincipled, lawless men devoted only to their political party. Their

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[44] Ibid., p. 529.

[45] Ibid.

[46] James F. Hopkins, et. al., eds., The Papers of Henry Clay, 9 vols. (Lexington: The University of Kentucky Press, 1959-1988), 8:697-98.

[47] United States Congress, The Congressional Globe, 23rd. Congress, 1st. session, p. 198.

policies, he went on, had burdened the people of North Carolina with debilitating debt. Even more damning, they had violated a sacred trust and tested the public's faith in representative government. Mangum depicted himself as a guardian of republicanism, promising to reanimate what Jackson had killed. "My object is to check, if possible, bold and lawless usurpation, and to avert from the country the evils consequent upon it."[48] Sounding yet another familiar theme, he lashed out against political parties. "The only great principle . . . which the friends of the administration were required to support was the principle of office."[49] Running through the issues of the day -- the Bank, the tariff, internal improvements, and distribution -- Mangum sought to demonstrate that Jackson's every move was dictated by partisanship, nothing more. Politicians, abetted by a cynical, manipulative and rabidly partisan press, had poisoned the body politic, Mangum clamored from the floor of the Senate, sure that his words would carry all the way back home.[50]

Part of Mangum's plan was to replace one icon with another. To do this he returned to the tariff. He reminded Southerners that, despite administration promises to the contrary, the act of 1832 had failed to heed their simple pleas for "a judicious tariff."[51] Instead, Jackson tried to take from Southern purses more than their fair share of taxes. His reckless policies, Mangum asserted, had driven the nation to the brink of civil war. Only the bold and selfless intervention of the great compromiser, Henry Clay, prevented

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[48] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 5:569.

[49] Ibid., 5:572.

[50] Ibid., 5:569.

[51] Ibid., 5:574.

a cataclysm. In giving his polemical rendition of the past, Mangum took license with history in the name of principle. Casting down a hero could not be done unless a second waited in the wings. Henry Clay, if Mangum was to have his way, would be the national figure around whom a party could form.[52]

The public reaction to Mangum's February 25 speech was, for the most part, favorable. John Chavis, his former tutor, was the first to applaud his new course. Dozens of other laudatory notes quickly followed and continued to drift in well into the session. Some came from prominent individuals, like John Branch and William Blount, others arrived from citizens groups, including one from the signers of the Burke County resolution and one from Mangum's neighbors in Hillsborough.[53] Many correspondents lionized Mangum and spoke of the glories that awaited him and all the other friends of Henry Clay. Brother Priestly, in keeping with his wary nature, tendered a more reserved assessment. "The great body of our People would sustain the President" on the deposit question, the younger Mangum wrote. As to who would back Willie, Priestly thought former Federalists, friends of the Bank, folks engaged in commerce, and "generally the intilligent [sic]" the most likely candidates.[54]

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[52] Ibid., 5:585.

[53] Ibid., 2:103, 105-06, 106-07, 116-17, 121, 122, 126, 127-31, 133, 136, 139, 142, 143-44, 147, 158, 171.

[54] Ibid., 2:118.

Willie Mangum enjoyed a special rapport with the press in Raleigh. He often furnished local editors with Senate documents and other material to fill their pages.[55] The speech provided more grist. Both the Raleigh Register and the Raleigh Star printed his speech in its entirety on their front pages.[56] The Salisbury Western Carolinian included scathing criticism of Senator Bedford Brown in a story praising Mangum. Mangum's most unrestrained anti-administration tirade to date had reached the people of the Old North State. It was only a matter of time before he would learn how they would respond.

The next step in his defection from the Democrats involved something far more serious than a verbal harangue. After three months of debate, the senate voted on Henry Clay's resolutions of censure against Andrew Jackson and Roger Taney. Clay challenged the president and his Treasury Secretary on the grounds that they had failed to consult Congress before removing the deposits from the Bank. First brought to the senate in December 1833, Clay's maneuver won added legitimacy following the February 1834 release of a Finance Committee report declaring the Bank safe and denouncing the actions of the administration. Mangum, who voiced support for the report, franked copies of it to key figures in the anti-Jackson contingent in North Carolina. The vote proved a test of party solidarity and a defining moment in the life of the anti-Democratic movement in the South. On March 28, 1834, the Senate voted 28 to 18 to censure Taney and 26 to 20 to censure Jackson. Mangum voted "yea" both times. Bedford Brown supported Jackson as

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[55] Raleigh Star, 20 February 1834.

[56] Raleigh Register, 18 March 1834; Raleigh Star, 27 March 1834; Western Carolinian (Salisbury), 8, 22 March 1834.

he and Mangum became focal points of party organization back home. Three senators who had voted against rechartering the Bank -- Mangum, John Tyler of Virginia, and George M. Bibb of Kentucky -- voted for censure. Nine senators from five slave states stood behind Clay, seven backed the president. Jackson had lost his grip on the South. The contest over censuring the president and Taney united southern foes of the administration as never before. The party leadership had expressed its solidarity with the censure vote. So too did the electorate with their anti-removal petition drives. Together they appeared ready to challenge the political dominance of the Jacksonians in North Carolina.[57]

Reactions to Mangum's vote to censure a sitting president came from all quarters. Some praised the senator for his courage in adhering to republican principles in challenging the president. Others cursed him for deserting the sacred cause of democracy. Both parties drew on the same images and rhetoric. Immediately after the censure vote, Mangum's opponents organized a rally in Tarborough against him.[58] During the summer of 1834, however, the Judge received encouraging news from his fellow Tar Heels. His

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[57] United States Congress, Register of Debates in Congress, 23rd Cong., 1st sess., p. 1187; Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 2:98; Hoffman, "Willie P. Mangum and the Whig Revival of the Doctrine of Instructions," p. 342; Brown, Politics and Statesmanship, p. 157; Cooper, The South and the Politics of Slavery, p. 52; Thomas Jeffrey, State Parties and National Politics: North Carolina, 1814-1861, (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1989), pp. 41, 47; Richard P. McCormick, "Was There a 'Whig Strategy' in 1836?" Journal of the Early Republic 4 (1984):51; Robert V. Remini, Henry Clay: Statesman for the Union, (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1991), p. 456.

[58] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 2:137.

friends in Fayetteville passed resolutions at a public meeting venerating Mangum as "a defender of constitutional liberty."[59] Alexander M. Kirkland offered the following toast at a fourth of July celebration in Hillsborough: "The honorable Willie P. Mangum from the 'Rip Van Winkle of the South.' If his constituents do sleep, he is ever awake to her true interests."[60] Mangum's deeds in Washington had defined the context of political discourse in North Carolina.

The evolution of evenly-matched, massed-based political parties in North Carolina happened gradually. Both state and national issues divided the friends of the administration from their opponents. Personal rivalries among the leadership of the two groups played a part as well. Whatever the cause, two such parties were in place by the mid-1830s. Their roots reached deep into the past, representing rivalries that antedated the major issues and nearly all of the leaders. Neither organization could claim sole control of a particular region. Instead, Whigs and Democrats could be found in every part of the state, though not in an even disbursement. Wealthier counties, especially those situated on the central and southern coastal plains, areas with large numbers of planters and slaves, tended to vote Democratic. Folks in the central piedmont district and the western counties voted otherwise. These patterns, however, were not entirely clear cut. In fact voting patterns in North Carolina were unique to the south in that they did not exhibit a strong correlation between region and party identity. With so few cities, urban-

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[59] Raleigh Register, 1 July 1834.

[60] Hillsborough Recorder, 9 July 1834.

rural divisions were almost unknown. As were ethno-religious tensions. Most Tar Heels claimed British ancestry and worshipped in Baptist or Methodist churches. Primitive Baptists, who responded positively to Democratic rhetoric supporting the separation of church and state, and Quakers, who opposed Jackson because of his military background, were the only denominations to show a discernable preference for a particular party in antebellum North Carolina.[61]

The social composition of the leadership of the two parties also shared similar characteristics. Both groups were dominated by the economic elite. Although the degree of market penetration in a given region helped determine if certain issues -- internal improvements being the best example -- would win popular approval, economic factors had only a marginal impact on party identity.[62] Most North Carolinians were political moderates, especially when compared to the folks who lived in the deep south. "It is very certain that Mr. Van Buren is not a favorite in North Carolina; - Nullification and he are in decided minorities," David L. Swain wrote Mangum.[63] The governor, an astute

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[61] Marc W. Kruman, Parties and Politics in North Carolina, 1836-1865, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana Press, 1983), pp. 6, 14-19; Jeffrey, State Parties and National Politics, p. 161; Harold J. Counihan, "North Carolina 1815-1836: State and Local Perspectives on the Age of Jackson," (Ph. D. dissertation, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1971), p. iii; Folsom, "Party Formation & Development in Jacksonian America," p. 223; James Oakes, "From Republicanism to Liberalism: Ideological Change and the Crisis of the Old South," American Quarterly 37 (1985):564-65; Brian G. Walton, "Elections to the United States Senate in North Carolina, 1835-1861," North Carolina Historical Review 53 (1976):171.

[62] Pessen, Jacksonian America, pp. 235, 239; Kruman, Parties and Politics, pp. 8-9.

[63] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 2:58.

observer of state politics, imagined his constituents to be moderates. Neither the Democrats nor their opponents exhibited the pro-southern militancy associated with nullification. Both swore deep and abiding allegiance to the Union and did not perceive any great threats to their way of life coming from the North.[64]

Opponents of Andrew Jackson began using the term "Whig" to describe themselves during the nullification crisis and Bank war. The appellation had clear republican overtones, derived as it was from Great Britain's anti-royalist country party. American Whigs used the name to stress their opposition to "executive tyranny." The party in office used the name and all it symbolized to win the support of the electorate. The name "Whig" had been in the American political lexicon since the Revolutionary War period. During the winter of 1832-33, nullifiers referred to themselves as "Whigs." By February 1834, North Carolinians had adopted the label to distinguish themselves from the unpopular National Republicans.[65] Willie Mangum, though still stridently antipartisan, referred to himself as a Whig in the fall of that year. "I quarrel with no man for calling

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[64] John Ashworth, "Agrarians" and "Aristocrats": Party Political Ideology in the United States, 1837-1846, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983), p. 247; Pessen, Jacksonian America, p. 230.

[65] Charleston Mercury, 17 December 1832; United States Congress, Register of Debates in Congress, 23rd Cong., 1st sess., pp. 1313-14; Cole, The Whig Party in the South, pp. 17-18; Pessen, Jacksonian America, p. 201; Jeffrey, State Parties and National Politics, p. 42; McCormick, "Was There a 'Whig Strategy' in 1836?" p. 53; E. Malcolm Carroll, Origins of the Whig Party, (Durham: Duke University Press, 1925) p. 118; Ronald P. Formisano, "Deferential-Participation Politics: The Early Republic's Political Culture, 1789-1840," American Political Science Review 68 (1974):474-75.

me a Whig," he admitted to newspaper editor John Beard, "yet I feel it no compliment."[66] In December 1834, a person writing in the Raleigh Register under the alias "Sydney" urged all who were committed to "arresting the downward course of things" to unite under the banner "State Right Societies or Whig Associations." Promising to fight "the abuses and mal-practices of this administration," and to bring down "hypocrites and office hunters," opponents of Andrew Jackson in North Carolina had come together as Whigs.[67]

Several factions in North Carolina merged behind the Whig name. These included Unionists and nullifiers, nationalists and states rights advocates, ex-Federalists and ex-Republicans, and people both for and against the Bank, for and against the tariff, for and against internal improvements. Barbourites, supporters of John Branch, and other dissident Jacksonians swelled the ranks of the Whig Party. Only their mutual distrust of Jackson held them together during their first years in existence. Given this diversity, consensus on matters of policy was hard to reach. At first, their internal differences left the North Carolina Whigs unable to decide which national leader they should follow. Even their official name, the "States Rights Whig Party," revealed their persistent localism and sense of independence from the national organization.[68]

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[66] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 2:216.

[67] Raleigh Register, 23, 30 December 1834.

[68] Williams, "The Foundations of the Whig Party in North Carolina," pp. 120-21; Jeffrey, State Parties and National Politics, pp. 89, 152, 156, 186; Max R. Williams, "Reemergence of the Two Party System," in The North Carolina Experience: An Interpretive and Documentary History, eds. Lindley S. Butler and Alan D. Watson (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1984), pp. 243-44; Henry M. Wagstaff, State Rights and Political Parties in North Carolina, 1776-1861, (Baltimore: The

Once he crossed over to the opposition, Willie Mangum helped bridge these differences and bring cohesion to the organization. The senator proved the ideal conciliator. Having been careful not to upset the friends of the Bank or of John Calhoun, Mangum enjoyed working relationships with both the nationalists and the nullifiers. He brought with him to the party dozens of lesser, state-level operatives, loyal clients to the powerful senator. From the time of his defection, fellow Whigs looked to Mangum as their leader. As a resident of centrally-located Orange County, Mangum enjoyed the added advantage of living near the locus of power. Poor transportation networks and local geographic factors dictated that political power within the state resided with those in closest proximity to the capital city. With the aid of John Branch, David Swain, and several others, Mangum began building a political machine, organizing a web of contacts both within and outside North Carolina. By 1835, they had established a central committee in Raleigh to coordinate the activities of the county committees. These smaller bodies elected delegates to district conventions for the purpose of running gubernatorial campaigns and naming presidential electors. They were also charged with disseminating information and party propaganda to the public. Newspapers like the Raleigh Register, the Hillsborough Recorder, the Fayetteville Observer, and the Salisbury Western Carolinian aided in this process. After a slow start, leaders gradually learned to overcome their aversion to organized parties and convinced voters to do the same. Having enlisted

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Johns Hopkins Press, 1906), p. 69.

some of the finest and most able editors and politicians in the state, North Carolina's Whig Party built up a following ready to challenge the Democrats.[69]

Throughout the spring and summer of 1834, North Carolina Whigs worked closely with their counterparts in other states to fashion a national party. Willie Mangum became one of his state's leading exponents of interstate cooperation. He and Henry Clay, for example, exchanged ideas about campaigning and kept each other abreast of election results in their home states. Duff Green, John C. Calhoun, and William Campbell Preston, all from South Carolina, labored alongside Mangum as well. In 1834, the four men worked together to enlist subscribers for a recently established states rights Whig newspaper. Mangum eventually won national recognition as a leading southern Whig. Invitations to speak at formal dinners, political rallies, and Fourth of July picnics came from as far away as Saratoga Springs, New York and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.[70] Mangum's enemies in North Carolina viewed his new-found notoriety with disdain. In the debut issue of the North Carolina Standard, a Raleigh-based sheet with ties to the Jackson

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[69] Hoffman, "Willie P. Mangum and the Whig Revival of the Doctrine of Instructions," pp. 342-43; Pegg, The Whig Party in North Carolina, pp. 12, 28; Kruman, Parties and Politics, pp. 20, 52; Thomas Jeffrey, "Internal Improvements and Political Parties in Antebellum North Carolina, 1836-1860," North Carolina Historical Review 55 (1978):117; Richard P. McCormick, The Second American Party System: Party Formation in the Jacksonian Era, (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1966), pp. 206-07; Williams, "Reemergence of the Two Party System, pp. 244-45; Marc W. Kruman, "Thomas L. Clingman and the Whig Party: A Reconsideration," North Carolina Historical Review 64 (1979):9; Williams, "The Foundations of the Whig Party in North Carolina," pp. 119, 124; Wagstaff, State Rights and Political Parties, p. 69; Jeffrey, State Parties and National Politics, pp. 92-93, 106.

[70] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 2:165, 167, 169, 170, 173, 174-75, 191, 255, 257.

camp, editor Philo White attacked Mangum (without ever mentioning him by name) for betraying Jackson. In the next edition and over the course of several weeks a correspondent by the name of "Lucius" painted Mangum as a manipulative political manager whose party loyalty mattered more than principle. Like Mangum, the friends of the administration used antiparty rhetoric to pillory and defame their rivals.[71]

There was some truth in "Lucius'" remarks. The garrulous North Carolinian habitually consorted with public officials, often at dinner parties, and these associations may have appeared secretive or self-serving to outsiders. Nevertheless, Mangum attended informal gatherings aware that they could help initiate formal alliances. On March 8, 1834, he dined with Senators Calhoun and Preston of South Carolina, Samuel Southard of New Jersey, and Peleg Sprague of Maine. Joined by several members of the House of Representatives, the occasion was as much a business meeting as a social affair. Congressman John Quincy Adams, also present, recalled that "the company sat late at table, and the conversation was chiefly upon politics."[72] During the early national period politics remained intensely personal. The fate of a piece of legislation or a political alliance often hinged on the ability of politicians to use friendships to his advantage, an approach that Mangum knew well. Colleagues on either side of the political fence recognized him as friendly, outgoing, and personable and he used his popularity to the

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[71] North Carolina Standard, 7, 14, 21 November, 5, 19 December 1834.

[72] Charles Francis Adams, ed., Memoirs of John Quincy Adams: Comprising Portions of his Diary from 1795 to 1845, 12 vols. (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott & Co., 1874-1877), 9:105.

utmost. Whether entertaining visiting Tar Heels, celebrating Christmas with national power brokers, or dining privately with Georgia opposition leader John M. Berrien, Mangum played the role of back-room politician to the hilt.[73]

In June 1834, Mangum's skill as a party leader, his mastery of the politics of personalities, and his incomparable powers of observation all converged as the House of Representatives met to elect a new Speaker. James K. Polk of Tennessee, the choice of Andrew Jackson, expected additional support from the nullifiers. Whig opponents, however, split the nullifier vote by nominating Richard H. Wilde, a Georgian with strong nullification credentials of his own. Outraged, Polk turned to Mangum and asked that he use his influence to sway the undecided. Mangum stalled because he had yet to learn whom the administration was backing. A third candidate, John Bell, also from Tennessee, refused to have the dispute settled by a caucus. Instead, he openly sought votes from both Whigs and Democrats. By the seventh ballot Bell had closed within eight votes of the leader Polk. Wilde's supporters, sensing their man's faltering chances, prepared to cast their votes for Polk, a move which would have put him over the top. But rumors about Polk's ties to the "kitchen cabinet" gave them pause. Meanwhile, news of Bell's gains on the seventh ballot had reached Vice President Van Buren, who was then presiding over the

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[73] Russo, "The Major Political Issues of the Jacksonian Period," pp. 47-48; Wiltse, John C. Calhoun, p. 224; J. W. Bryan to his brother, 6 May 1836, Bryan Family Papers, Special Collections, Duke University Library, Durham, North Carolina; George Poindexter to Willie P. Mangum, 21 December 1834, Willie Person Mangum Papers, Special Collections, Duke University Library, Durham, North Carolina; John M. Berrien to Willie P. Mangum, 19 January 1835, Willie P. Mangum Family Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

senate. As Van Buren read the message, Mangum studied his reaction. Slowly, a look of dismay fell over the New Yorker's bewhiskered face. Mangum knew at once that Polk was Van Buren's man. Without hesitation, he sent word across the rotunda directing all states rights men to throw their weight behind Bell. They did. On the tenth ballot the House elected John Bell Speaker. From his desk, Willie Mangum smiled wryly as the results were announced to the senate. He had earned this moment of smug contentment, having just given an impressive demonstration of his political power and, more satisfying still, having outfoxed the "Red Fox" himself, Martin Van Buren.[74]

In the late summer and early autumn of 1834, Willie Mangum toured the middle Atlantic and New England states as part of a Senate Finance Committee investigation of the Second Bank of the United States. The fact-finding mission took the five committee members to branch offices in New York, Philadelphia, and Boston. There they inspected bank records in an effort to determine the viability of the institution. For Mangum, the trip was something of an adventure. His first visit to three of the most populous cities in the nation, Mangum faithfully recorded his impressions of the people he met and the sights he had seen. His letters from this period are the most revealing he had ever written. They exhibit a curious and complex nature. On one page, he writes with the freshness of a wide-eyed young man and he is funny, wise, and warm. On the next page he is the cynic. Dark, sullen, lonely, his words leave the reader cold. In the end, the trip took him to new

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[74] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 2:349-52; Charles G. Sellers, James K. Polk, Jacksonian, 1795-1843, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957), pp. 240-42; Remini, Henry Clay, p. 469; Joseph Howard Parks, John Bell of Tennessee, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1950), pp. 73-75, 95.

places where he met new friends. He came away with a new impression of his northern allies and made important connections in the world of finance, men who would forever alter his outlook on government and the economy.

The first leg of the journey took Mangum to New York City. A cholera epidemic forced the party to delay its official business until a later date. As his ship sat in its berth in the port, Mangum braved the epidemic, hired a coach for one dollar and fifty cents and took a two-hour ride through the streets of Gotham. He felt it the best money he had ever spent. "Take New York altogether, its bays, its rivers, its city & its heights about it they form the most picturesque & delightful spot I ever saw," Mangum wrote his wife. Only the mountains of North Carolina, he boasted, surpassed the scenic beauty of New York City.[75]

The voyage from New York to Newport, Rhode Island proved equally breathtaking. When they reached port, Mangum, accompanied by John Tyler, combed the city in search of a decent room. Finding none to his liking, he decided to continue on to Providence at daybreak. Having sent his bags ahead, Mangum left for the pier at seven in the morning. Much to his chagrin, he arrived at the dock just as his ship was steaming out of the harbor. As he watched his luggage being carried up river, he lost his characteristic sang froid. "You may be sure that even my mild & patient temper was a little ruffled."[76] Regaining his composure, Mangum walked to a nearby ticket office where

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[75] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 2:183.

[76] Ibid, 2:185.

he booked passage to Providence on an overland stage. The splendor of the Rhode Island countryside put the senator in a better frame of mind. He arrived at the state capital in time for dinner.

Impressed as he was with Providence Mangum felt restless, so he boarded another stage the following morning and left for Boston. Again he found the landscape more beautiful than he had ever imagined. Once there, Mangum tried to register at the Tremont House, "the fashionable Hotel and the very best in the United States," only to be greeted by a full house. He met with similar bad luck at all of the other upscale hotels in the city. Finally, he landed a room at a private boarding house on Pearl Street. The finely-furnished home impressed him so much that he decided to stay in for the evening and put off his planned visit to the home of Daniel Webster until the following day. On August 22, the day after he arrived in Boston, Mangum called on his friend. Webster proved a gracious host. Insisting that Mangum give up his room on Pearl Street, Webster used his pull to get the North Carolinian a room at the Tremont. He then escorted his guest on a walking tour of Boston, sure to stop in at all of his favorite haunts. Mangum found the people of Boston "the most civil in the world." Yet for all their kindness, he noted an air of superficiality about them. "Fashion here, is a much greater tyrant than it is with us, or even than Gen. Jackson himself," he joked to Charity.[77] Northerners, he concluded, although cordial and polite, were cold and distant, bearing a "slight incrustation of ice

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[77] Ibid, 2:194.

about them."[78] He thought it was his high station that caught the attention of strangers: Had he not been a senator, had he been "unknown to the world," he would have remained thus to the people of Boston. Southerners, by way of contrast, treated everyone equally. At least this is how Mangum envisioned his home.[79]

Once brilliant cities were slowly taking on a darker hue. "All cities are rather vulgar things," he wrote after wandering the streets of Boston. "When you see one great city, you have seen nearly all, they are so much alike."[80] A trip to the "great manufacturing town" of Lowell, Massachusetts only confirmed his misgivings about the North's free-labor economy. "Everything indicated a prosperity leading rapidly to wealth & was in every way agreeable," he wrote, "except the thousands of Girls, from 12 to 18 years of age, that labor here." This "melancholy & painful spectacle," he believed, would never be seen in the South. "I had rather my daughters should go into the cornfields with their hoes," he added, ". . . than they should go into a factory." The longer he remained in the North, the more he became disenchanted. Troubled by the unfamiliar nature of labor relations in an industrial capitalist economy, Mangum interpreted all he saw through the eyes of a paternalistic slaveowner, holding strong to the agrarian ideal long associated with Thomas Jefferson.[81]

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[78] Ibid, 2:215.

[79] Ibid, 2:194.

[80] Ibid.

[81] Ibid., 2:201-202.

Long days spent poring over Bank records and long nights at fashionable parties began to take their toll. Mangum longed for home. Even excursions to the shore, the home of John Quincy Adams, and Harvard University did little to relieve his anxiety. Only the calm of the organ and choral music at the Brattle Street Church in Boston helped sooth his frayed nerves.[82] From Boston, Mangum ventured south toward Philadelphia. Along the way he stopped in Hartford, Connecticut. There he went on a sightseeing tour of the city, culminating with a climb to the cupola perched atop the State House. The spectacular vista seemed to revive his ailing spirits. Leaving Hartford behind, the committee journeyed to New York City. With the cholera epidemic still in full force, the group was once again obliged to bypass New York and continue on to Philadelphia. They reached it in late September 1834.[83]

As September turned into October, Mangum's desire to return home became more acute. His business had kept him away from his wife and children longer than he had expected. Despite his progress with his work and success in obtaining contacts in the financial community, the Senator had grown restless and irritable. Illness had prevented Webster from leaving Boston. His assurances to rejoin the group when it came to New York that November only meant that Mangum and the rest had to log even longer hours in Philadelphia. Overwork may have contributed to the pessimistic tone of Mangum's appraisal of the new Whig alliance written during his stay in Philadelphia. On October

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[82] Ibid, 2:195-98.

[83] Ibid, 2:200-205.

7, 1834, he informed John Beard that "the basis of all party organization in the North & East is naked interest. - Principles are silly things as contradistinguished from pecuniary interests." What principles they do hold, he added, are those we "abhor." He recalled an incident at a dinner party that took place shortly before he left Boston where he warned his northern friends that the South would rather secede than allow the North to trample on the rights of the individual states. The southern wing of the Whig Party, he cautioned, would not become a pawn of northern interests. Mangum delighted in shocking his hosts, whom he believed to be completely unaware of the depth of southern disdain for centralized authority. Unfortunately, he told Beard, the South could offer no native son with national appeal. Left with a choice between obeying his principles or falling in with Yankees, Mangum could only despair. Unless he could reconcile his own beliefs with those of his northern brethren, he lamented, he would retire. The new alliance between northern nationalists and southern states rights men seemed doomed from the outset.[84]

Mangum's gloomy forecast failed to take into account much of what united these seemingly diverse interests in the first place. Indeed, the very committee report that came out of his prolonged excursion to the North attested to the cohesion of the Whigs. Written by Tyler, the report echoed the party line verbatim. The Bank, the committee found, had been safe prior to the removal of deposits and did not have a hand in influencing the political process. Beyond this show of party unity, Whigs, both northern and southern, could boast similar temperaments. In general, the men who called themselves Whigs were

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[84] Ibid, 2:212-19.

political moderates. Given to compromise and consensus building, they shared a suspicion of political parties and a love for the Union. As pragmatists, they worked constantly to balance sectional issues with their national agenda.[85]

Ideological differences between the Whigs and the Democrats were subtle. Whiggish values, like those of their opponents, fell under the broadly defined rubric "republicanism." Both parties drew upon these ideals, in part, to win over voters. Revolutionary era images and symbols gave these new organizations added legitimacy with a public weary of political parties. Whigs coded their critique of Jackson in republican rhetoric, damning the administration for abusing the veto and violating the separation of powers. Balancing classical republican concerns with the pragmatism of commercial capitalism, they broadened their appeal in New England and the West. Proposed internal improvements legislation, such as the Maysville Road Bill and a moderately protective tariff, appealed to the people in those regions who wished to play a greater role in an expanding market economy. Restoring the natural balance to an organic society, emphasizing a harmony of interests (whether referring to class or region), and promoting economic development for the good of the republic, became the battle cry of the Whigs.

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[85] Daily National Intelligencer (Washington, D.C.), 19 December 1834; Brown, Politics and Statesmanship, pp. 3, 6-7, 11-12, 156, 158-59, 172, 180, 217-18; Peter B. Knupfer, The Union as It Is: Constitutional Unionism and Sectional Compromise, 1787-1861, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991), p. 134; Larry Keith Menna, "Embattled Conservatism: The Ideology of the Southern Whigs," (Ph. D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1991), pp. 16-18, 34, 53-54, 297; John Niven, Martin Van Buren: The Romantic Age of American Politics, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), p. 373; Lynn L. Marshall, "The Strange Stillbirth of the Whig Party," American Historical Review 72 (1967):445.

Redefining parties as voluntary alliances made up of people from every strata of this organic social order and committed to a set of loosely defined principles enabled leaders like Mangum to set aside their antipartyism. Like many politicians of his generation, Mangum's own principles were necessarily elastic. Compromise, consensus, moderation, pragmatism: These proved to be the central pillars of Mangum's political creed. The doubt he expressed to John Beard in October 1834 proved fleeting, for he soon realized that what he had mistaken for the hard and fast principles of his northern counterparts were nothing of the kind. Common ideals, common temperaments, and common goals drew them together in ways Mangum was only just beginning to understand.[86]

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[86] Daniel Walker Howe, The Political Culture of the American Whigs, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1979), pp. 3, 9, 21, 52-53, 210; Major Wilson, "Republicanism and the Idea of Party in the Jacksonian Period," Journal of the Early Republic 8 (1988):426-27; Ashworth, "Agrarians" and "Aristocrats", p. 73; Jeffrey, State Parties and National Politics, p. 119; Formisano, "Deferential-Participation Politics," p. 486; Watson, Jacksonian Politics and Community Conflict, p. 313; Eric Foner, Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men: The Ideology of the Republican Party Before the Civil War, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), p. 19; Richard L. McCormick, The Party Period and Public Policy: American Politics from the Age of Jackson to the Progressive Era, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), pp. 160, 165; Richard P. McCormick, The Presidential Game: The Origins of American Presidential Politics, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), p. 10.

CHAPTER 7
INSTRUCTIONS

On December 11, 1834, the North Carolina House of Commons passed two resolutions referring to the right of instruction. The first of these reconfirmed the long-held, but seldom invoked authority of the General Assembly to instruct their United States Senators how to vote on a given question. The second had a more specific intent. By a vote of 69 to 57, the commoners agreed to instruct Willie Mangum to vote in favor of a bill to expunge the resolution of 1834 that censured Andrew Jackson for removing deposits from the Second Bank of the United States. On December 22, the senate followed suit. Democrats in Raleigh rejoiced that Mangum would have to change his stand on the Bank, resign his seat in the senate, or ignore the instructions, any one of which would embarrass him. Mangum now faced the fight of his life, they predicted, albeit not very accurately. While Mangum refused to obey the instructions, he did not immediately resign. Nor did he lose his influence in state and national politics. Instead he resisted their assaults. His tenacity won him the admiration of countless Tar Heels who rallied to his cause. He became a symbol, the much-needed focal point of a political party in its infancy. To the Democrats, Willie Mangum was the Whig Party incarnate, the target of their most bitter editorials and speeches. For the next two years Mangum would be the issue in North Carolina politics. Ultimately he would step down. Even in retirement Mangum remained

an issue as his vindication became the raison d'etre of the North Carolina Whigs. Upon reinstatement to the senate in 1840, Willie Mangum was the unquestioned leader of his state's Whig Party and one of the most influential figures in national politics.[1]

The doctrine of instructions dated back to the Continental Congress, when representatives were likened to ambassadors at a foreign court. Four states, among them North Carolina, included provisions for the instruction of United States senators in their original constitutions. During the first congressional assembly under the new constitution, Thomas Tudor Tucker of South Carolina argued unsuccessfully to add the right of instruction to the Bill of Rights. By the 1790s, however, the practice had fallen into disrepute after several incidents exposed its potential for abuse. Still, proponents argued that because senators had been elected by state legislatures they should be responsive to its will. Detractors countered that representatives in Washington should be allowed to follow their consciences unless otherwise commanded by a popular convention. In 1824, Mangum alluded to the concept of congressional free will in a speech before congress. By the 1830s, the Whigs had refined this idea, acknowledging the accountability of representatives but adding that instructions violated the basic principles of representative

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[1] William S. Hoffman, Andrew Jackson and North Carolina Politics (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1958), p. 79; Harry L. Watson, Jacksonian Politics and Community Conflict: The Emergence of the Second Party System in Cumberland County North Carolina (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1981), p. 185.

government. Democrats, on the other hand, found instructions to be an easy means of maintaining party discipline and freely used the tool.[2]

Mangum had suspected for some time that the Democrats would try to use instructions to their advantage. Despite their protestations to the contrary, his own party had attempted the same tactic against Senator Bedford Brown in the March 1834. Their attempt to instruct him to vote in favor of restoring deposits to the Bank failed. Moreover, it left them open to almost certain retaliation. Mangum's own behavior left him vulnerable as well. In December 1833, he had privately urged Governor David L. Swain to instruct him to vote for Henry Clay's distribution bill, thus conceding the validity of the controversial doctrine.[3]

With the North Carolina General Assembly in recess, Mangum had to wait until learning if the rumors he had heard about instructions were valid. In the interim he reflected on the path he had chosen and the battle that lay ahead. On October 7, 1834, from his dimly-lit room in Philadelphia, Mangum shared his thoughts with newspaper editor John Beard. "I have been denounced as an 'apostate.' I feel the injustice of it," he

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[2] Clement Eaton, "Southern Senators and the Right of Instruction, 1789-1860," Journal of Southern History 18 (1952):303, 305, 307, 318-19; John Ashworth, "Agrarians" and "Aristocrats": Party Political Ideology in the United States, 1837-1846 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983), p. 57; William R. Brock, Parties & Political Conscience: American Dilemmas, 1840-1850 (Millwood, N.Y.: KTO Press, 1979), pp. 8-9; Henry Thomas Shanks, ed., The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 5 vols. (Raleigh: State Department of Archives and History, 1950-1956), 5:498-99.

[3] William S. Hoffman, "Willie P. Mangum and the Whig Revival of the Doctrine of Instructions," The Journal of Southern History 22 (1956):343-45; Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 2:54.

grumbled, adding "I have abandoned no principle upon which I was elected. - & yet I had rather go home and eat straw than to remain in public life at the sacrifice of my own self respect." Biding their time back in North Carolina, Democratic legislators readied themselves for a long fight.[4]

Answering a call from the Democratic press in Washington, Dr. John Potts of the North Carolina House of Commons introduced a resolution calling upon Mangum to vote for Senator Thomas Hart Benton's expunging resolution. Put forward on November 28, 1834, the Potts resolution started a debate that lasted nearly two weeks. Mangum's allies in the General Assembly banded together to forestall passage. John Branch led the contingent in the upper chamber while William A. Graham did his best to see that the House rejected the Potts resolution. Former Senator James Iredell and Governor Swain lent their support as well. For all their prestige and talent, however, Mangum's friends could not muster enough votes to deny his opponents their revenge. This they seemed to understand from the outset. On November 17, 1834, the General Assembly had reelected Bedford Brown to the United States Senate by a vote of 113 to 60. His wide margin of victory portended defeat for the pro-Mangum forces on the instruction vote. Accordingly, his friends in Raleigh proceeded as if the resolution had already passed. While they promised to put up a good fight on his behalf, they also intimated to Mangum that instructions were forthcoming and urged that he ignore them once they arrived. Only Assemblyman Richard H. Alexander seemed to believe that Mangum could win the battle,

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[4] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 2:218.

but only if he came to Raleigh to lead the fight himself. Mangum decided to leave that task to his lieutenants and corresponded with them regularly to plan strategy.[5] James Graham, the brother of William, met with Mangum in Washington and found him at ease, "prepared to hear the Judgement of Condemnation from Raleigh."[6] It came on December 11, when the House voted 69 to 57 in favor of the instructions resolution. Two weeks later, the senate approved the measure by a vote of 33 to 28.[7]

Mangum immediately learned of the results through unofficial channels. Agonizing over how to respond, he sketched his thoughts in two letters to William Graham. Dated December 16 and 17, they convey anguish and resentment. The senator was tired. His sojourn to the North had kept him from his wife and family for too long. It had tried his patience for politics as well. On top of all that, he now had to endure the humiliation of being instructed by a hostile legislature to do something he thought was wrong. "Were I to consult either my pride or my feelings, I should resign instantly," he told Graham.[8] But

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[5] Hoffman, "Willie P. Mangum and the Whig Revival of the Doctrine of Instructions," pp. 338, 346-47; Daniel M. McFarland, "Rip Van Winkle: Political Evolution in North Carolina, 1815-1835" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1954), pp. 425-26; Herbert Dale Pegg, The Whig Party in North Carolina (Chapel Hill: Colonial Press, 1968), pp. 21-22; Thomas Jeffrey, State Parties and National Politics: North Carolina, 1814-1861 (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1989), p. 43; Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 2:225-26, 229, 230-31, 232.

[6] J. G. de Roulhac Hamilton and Henry M.Wagstaff, eds., The Papers of William Alexander Graham, 8 vols. (Raleigh: State Department of Archives and History, 1957-1992), 1:335.

[7] North Carolina, General Assembly, Journal of the House of Commons (Raleigh: State Printer, 1834), pp. 187, 189; Jeffrey, State Parties and National Politics, p. 43.

[8] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 2:241.

he would not give his enemies the satisfaction of so easy a victory. Besides, his honor was at stake. "My strongest wish is to leave this position, as soon as I may do it with honor, & the respect of good men," he confided to his old classmate.[9]

Instructions, as Mangum understood them, represented "a gross perversion of the spirit of the Constitution" because they handed control of the senate to a partisan president.[10] To Mangum and the Whigs, this infringement of the principle of the separation of powers could not be tolerated. They viewed the senate as the bulwark of republicanism, protecting the people from a despotic chief executive. To surrender on the question of instructions, Mangum held, would be to grant the president the "absolute power" of a king.[11] Only a mandate from the people of North Carolina, Mangum wrote, could budge him from his seat in the senate. So, Mangum established the rules of engagement. "If I shall resign at all . . . it will be only when the trust can be surrendered to the people."[12] He held this position throughout the controversy.

Beyond the great constitutional principles at risk, Mangum saw trouble ahead for the Whig Party. Grave consequences would result if the Democrats were allowed to proceed unchecked with their plan to instruct any official who strayed from their party line. In his second letter to Graham, Mangum concentrated on the practical partisan issues at stake. "If I resign," he wrote the morning of December 17, "Jackson will be able to

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[9] Ibid., 2:242.

[10] Ibid., 2:241.

[11] Ibid.

[12] Ibid., 2:243.

control the next Congress. If I stand firmly, the opposition will continue in the ascendancy in the next Congress."[13] He based this conjecture on the fact that two other southern Whig senators -- Gabriel Moore of Alabama and John Black of Mississippi -- faced the same dilemma as Mangum: Submit to disagreeable instructions or resign their seats in the senate. "They both say that if I resign, it would be impossible for them to stand up against the storm that will blow upon them. - That if I stand firm, that they will stand by me to the death."[14] Finally, Mangum thought that the South would be dealt a fatal blow if he were to surrender his independence, that state legislators in the North would begin to use instructions to press their agenda in Washington to the detriment of the South. So he decided to hold firm. Friends and associates encouraged this resolve, writing daily to shore up his confidence and pledge their fidelity. On January 2, 1835, he received an official copy of the instructions from Governor Swain, himself torn by duty to office and loyalty to his ally. Mangum chose to ignore them and challenge the doctrine of instructions.[15]

As expected, local editors praised and condemned Mangum's inaction, depending on their partisan affiliation. The ensuing war of words attests to the maturity of the journalistic arm of the new political parties. Well disciplined and well organized, Whig and Democratic editors in North Carolina took their partisan positions. The pro-Whig

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[13] Ibid., 2:245.

[14] Ibid.

[15] Ibid., 2:236-37, 239, 249, 260; Carolyn A. Daniel, "David Lowry Swain, 1801-1835" (Ph. D. dissertation, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1954), p. 501.

Raleigh Register pointed to Democratic solidarity exemplified by the instructions vote as reason enough for their party to demand discipline from its members. Of course they shrouded this call to arms in the language of republicanism, but their meaning was clear -- we must organize to defeat the "organization." The Register claimed that instructions violated the state and national constitutions as well as the expressed will of the people of North Carolina.[16] Like Mangum, the editor of the Raleigh Star described the fight in apocalyptic terms, with the Whigs on the side of justice and the "corrupt and tyrannical junto, known by the title of the Albany Regency" on the side of self-interest. Identifying North Carolina's Democrats with Vice President Martin Van Buren and his allegedly corrupt political machine reminded voters that the Democrats were in league with unpopular northern interests.[17] Not to be outdone, Democratic editor Philo White portrayed Mangum as a lying, unprincipled, evil man and made repeated calls for Mangum to obey the instructions or else resign.[18]

Throughout January and February 1835, Mangum received dozens of letters advising him on instructions. All but one recommended that he disregard them. Newspaper editors, petitioners, friends and strangers all wrote of their admiration for Mangum. "It is confidently believed," Alexander Greer wrote in a typical letter, "the country will sustain you and your worthy colleagues who have thrown themselves into the

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[16] Raleigh Register, 30 December 1834; 27 January 1835; 2, 10 February 1835.

[17] Raleigh Star, 1 January 1835.

[18] North Carolina Standard (Raleigh), 26 December 1834; 16, 23 January 1835; 6 February 1835.

breach to defend the constitution against a band of ruthless ruffians and deluded man worshipers."[19] Shortly into the new year, Willie Mangum decided to limit his letter writing to appear impartial and antipartisan. To his brother Priestly, this "inattention to epistolary writing" was unwise, because it "affords neither evidence of your friendship for us - or any sure guaranty [sic] for building up friendship in others."[20] Judging by the volume of mail pouring into his office, Priestly was mistaken.[21] This overwhelming show of support proved encouraging, even emboldening. "I suppose no one imagines that I will submit to the degrading requisition upon me," Mangum wrote to Daniel M. Barringer. "Seeking to make me the instrument of my own personal degradation," he continued, "I shall resist it and vote in the face of it with the scorn that I feel for it & some of the principal authors."[22]

On March 3, 1834, the last day of the second session of the twenty-third congress, Mangum submitted the instructions to the senate and announced he would not obey them. He claimed, without elaboration, that they violated the Constitution, a document he had sworn to uphold. He repeated his pledge not to be a party to his "own personal degradation," adding that "he felt it his duty to guard the honor of his state, and not less

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[19] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 2:284.

[20] Ibid., 2:303.

[21] Ibid., 2:263-66, 266-68, 268-69, 270-71, 271-72, 273-75, 275-76, 276-77, 277-278, 278-79, 280, 281-82, 283-84, 287-88, 290-91, 293-94, 294-95, 295-96, 297-99, 299-300, 302-303, 306-309, 317-18.

[22] Willie P. Mangum to Daniel M. Barringer, 15 February 1835, Daniel Moreau Barringer Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

to guard his own personal honor; both, in his conception, imperiously required him to disregard the resolutions."[23] Beyond that, he "did not . . . consider the Senate the proper place to give his reasons for disobeying the instructions of the Legislature. That was a point he was to settle with his constituents."[24] The senate, as Mangum and other Whigs maintained, should hold itself above the partisan fray. It was a place where public opinion was to be refined, not blindly followed, the bastion where elite republicans stood guard against an impulsive and unstable majority.[25]

Again, public reaction to Mangum's stand proved to be, for the most part, positive. Governor Swain and Walter Mangum were among those to forward their salutations. Both approved his actions and urged that he stay the course. Other endorsements followed in quick succession. Richard H. Bonner, a legislator from Beaufort County, organized a public meeting near his home where citizens signed a petition in support of Mangum. Similar documents and private testimonials arrived from every part of the state.[26] Not everyone was so inclined. Forty-five people from Charlotte drew up a petition denouncing the senator. Franklin L. Smith, a Mecklenburg County lawyer, discredited that petition

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[23] United States Congress, Register of Debates in Congress, 23rd Cong., 2nd sess., p. 722.

[24] United States Congress, The Congressional Globe, 23rd Cong., 2nd sess., p. 324.

[25] Thomas Brown, Politics and Statesmanship: Essays on the American Whig Party (New York: Columbia University Press, 1975), p. 11; Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 2:241.

[26] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 2:290-91, 299-300, 319-22, 326-32, 333-34, 334, 337-38, 338-39, 340-41, 347-48, 355-56, 359-61; Daniel, "David Lowry Swain," p. 504.

as the handiwork of a few salaried politicians and not an accurate reflection of public sentiment.[27]

With the approach of summer, North Carolinians began to make preparations for outdoor festivities. Scores of them hoped to lure Mangum as their guest of honor. To that end, they assembled in county courthouses and town halls across the state and passed resolutions praising Mangum's courage and asking that he come in person to receive their thanks. Mangum accepted several of the entreaties and made plans for a goodwill tour of the state. In April he appeared at the first of these public dinners. Held in Raleigh and attended by more than 150 people, the banquet was a great success. "The utmost hilarity and good feeling pervaded," the Raleigh Register reported. The honored guests raised their glasses more than seventy times, toasting everyone and everything from George Washington to "agriculture, commerce, and manufacturing." Several speakers honored Mangum. The first one offered: "Our honored guest, Willie P. Mangum - Faithful & fearless - true to his county's best interest, the Constitution, and the law." With that, the band went into a rendition of "Come rest in this bosom my own stricken dear." As the evening drifted into night and the guests sank into inebriety, the toasts became more maudlin and pugnacious. Walter J. Ramsay lifted his cup to "Willie P. Mangum, as a statesman and orator, entitled to the appellation of the 'Henry Clay' of North Carolina." John Ligon saluted "Hugh L. White and Willie P. Mangum, the next president and vice president of the United States." David Carter offered a similar toast, doubtless convinced

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[27] Ibid., 2:335-36.

by earlier newspaper reports that Mangum was being considered by leading Whigs to run for the second office in 1836.[28]

The tour continued into the summer, taking Mangum to dinners and Fourth of July celebrations in Salisbury, Fayetteville, and Charlotte. In May, he attended a commemoration of the sixtieth anniversary of the Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence. In Mecklenburg County he was hailed as "servant of the people, and not the Legislature." Afterward, he spoke for two hours in an address highlighted by "biting sarcasm against the expunging resolutions."[29] Mangum used this and other forums to express his ideas about instructions and to help deflect criticism away from himself and restore substantive matters to the political debate. While issues national in scope, notably distribution and slavery, would wait until congress reconvened in December, constitutional revision, an issue festering in North Carolina state politics for almost forty years, was about to come to a head. For the time being Mangum could rest easy and watch as something other than himself took center stage in the political drama.

Reforming the North Carolina state constitution of 1776 had been a source of contention between eastern and western Tar Heels since the mid-1790s. Westerners resented the inordinate strength of the eastern counties, an imbalance deliberately worked into the document by the powerful eastern lawmakers who drafted it. Each county, regardless of area or population, sent one senator and two commoners to Raleigh, assuring

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[28] All quotes from, Raleigh Register, 21 April 1835; See also, ibid., 7, 14 April 1835.

[29] Western Carolinian (Salisbury), 6 June 1825; Jeffrey, State Parties and National Politics, p. 43.

a system of representation that favored the east, where far more counties lined the map than in the west. With a firm hold on the General Assembly, eastern legislators resisted every effort to surrender a greater share of control to the west. By the mid-1820s, however, the population of the west had surpassed that of the east and the cry for reform grew louder and more persistent. Willie Mangum and David Swain soon began to promote the idea of a constitutional convention. By January 1835, William Gaston and William Haywood, Jr. had won legislative sanction for the plan. Their cause finally made it through the General Assembly because eastern proponents of internal improvements knew that they would eventually need western votes to win approval of their efforts to finance railroad construction. Both Gaston and Haywood came from the east and, despite their political differences -- Gaston was a Whig, Haywood a Democrat -- both men championed state funding for internal improvements. Besides, many from the east realized that constitutional revision was probably inevitable and so decided to go along with their new western allies.[30]

According to Gaston and Haywood's bill, each county was to send two delegates to a convention slated for the early part of June. With Mangum facing an increasingly belligerent opposition on the instructions question, his friends divided over whether or not

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[30] Henry M. Wagstaff, State Rights and Political Parties in North Carolina, 1776-1861 (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1906), pp. 55, 61, 66-67; Marc W. Kruman, Parties and Politics in North Carolina, 1836-1865 (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1983), p. 11-13; Hoffman, Andrew Jackson and North Carolina Politics, pp. 83, 89; Watson, Jacksonian Politics and Community Conflict, p. 199; Harold J. Counihan, "The North Carolina Constitutional Convention of 1835: A Study in Jacksonian Democracy," North Carolina Historical Review 46 (1969):337.

he should represent Orange County. Paul Cameron, although sympathetic to Mangum's cause, thought it prudent that his former tutor resist the temptation to "come before the people at this time" as a candidate in the local race for delegates.[31] William Graham, Frederick Nash, and Priestly Mangum all urged the senator to run. Henry Seawell felt the same, adding that Mangum probably would be allowed to choose the second delegate if he so desired. Such flights of fancy never occurred to the pragmatist. He refused to openly participate, and by so doing, refused to make himself a sideshow in the contest. In the end, the people of Orange elected William Montgomery and Dr. James S. Smith as their delegates. For his part, Mangum would exert influence on the convention, but it would be done quietly, without fanfare and without controversy. That suited him fine.[32]

On June 4, 1835, the delegates assembled in Raleigh to draft a new state constitution. Whigs dominated the gathering, laying claim to 75 of the 128 seats. Eastern delegates tended to be more reactionary than their western counterparts. The document that came out of the convention reflected the western and Whig influences and marked an important juncture in the political and social history of North Carolina. It exhibited both egalitarian and authoritarian impulses. The franchise, for instance, was expanded to include more white males than ever before, but free black men, who had the vote under the first constitution, were disfranchised by the second. Delegates agreed to make the office of governor elective, but left it weak. Reapportionment of the General Assembly

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[31] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 2:291.

[32] Ibid., 2:301, 302-303, 307; Raleigh Register, 26 May 1835.

shifted power westward, but gave the east a slight advantage. Specifically, seats in the House of Commons were allotted according to population of each county, seats in the upper chamber according to taxable wealth. This allowed the wealthier eastern counties to retain control of the Senate while handing oversight of Commons to the more populous west. Higher property qualifications for voters in senatorial elections and limits on the amount of taxes that could be levied on slaves sat well with conservative easterners hoping to tighten their hold on the senate and protect their property rights. Whigs failed in their bid to preserve borough representation, which fell by the wayside in new constitution. The Constitution of 1835 retained minimum property qualifications for its membership and replaced annual elections with biennial state elections.[33]

Before the new constitution could become law it had to be approved by a majority of the voters. As expected, the most vocal supporters of the measure came from the western counties. The Salisbury Western Carolinian recommended passage, as did the Raleigh Register. Indeed, Whig newspapers across the state came out in favor of the referendum. Urbanites from the eastern and northeastern part of the state made up the third prong of the new coalition. Their advocacy of internal improvements and borough representation cemented an alliance with western Whigs. In the fall of 1835 the people of North Carolina voted 26,771 to 21,606 in favor of ratification. The final tally repeated

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[33] Counihan, "The North Carolina Constitutional Convention of 1835," pp. 336, 340, 345, 347-48, 362-63; Pegg, The Whig Party in North Carolina, p. 18; Richard P. McCormick, "Suffrage Classes and Party Alignments: A Study in Voter Behavior," Mississippi Valley Historical Review 46 (1959):398; Kruman, Parties and Politics, pp. 11-14; Watson, Jacksonian Politics and Community Conflict, p. 44, 62, 199; Hoffman, Andrew Jackson and North Carolina Politics, p. 86.

the old east-west divisions. Ninety percent of those in favor of ratification were from the western counties while 88 percent of those opposed hailed from the east. Only one eastern county -- Granville -- gave a majority to the new constitution; every western county turned out in favor. Orange County, Mangum's home, overwhelmingly approved the measure 1031 to 246. On December 3, 1835, Governor Swain officially announced the results. The new constitution went into effect on January 1, 1836.[34]

After decades of struggle and deliberation, constitutional revision had become a reality. The existence of two statewide, mass-based political parties partly explains the timing of this reform. Alliances transcended regional barriers as politicians from the east, especially those from the Albemarle Sound region, learned to work with men from the west. Paradoxically, the new constitution served to hasten the full development of the new party system. Perhaps the most important change involved the governorship. The fact that the post was now elective meant that both parties had to build the machinery essential to running statewide races. In the short term, Whigs proved better at this than their rivals, due in part to the high caliber and experience of their leaders. Other factors contributed to this early success. Whigs had earned the loyalty of scores of western voters, who credited them with reforming the new constitution. Recognized across the state as the

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[34] Counihan, "The North Carolina Constitutional Convention of 1835," pp. 361-62; Kruman, Parties and Politics, p. 10; J.G. de Roulhac Hamilton, Party Politics in North Carolina, 1835-1860 (Durham: Seeman Printery, 1916), p. 14; Raleigh Register, 24 November 1835.

party of internal improvements, the Whigs attracted would-be capitalists poised to take part in the market economy.[35]

Invigorated by this show of public support for the Whiggish constitution, Willie Mangum returned to Washington that December to begin the new session of congress. He looked anxiously ahead to a year that promised a renewal of "the presidential game" and heated debate over the slavery issue. Southern Whigs, unlike their partners to the north, expressed very little interest in injecting the moral issues of the Second Great Awakening into the political discourse. Although moving with Northern Whigs toward loose construction and the paternalistic state, southern Whigs resented attempts to tamper with slavery. They worked hard to demonstrate that they were more committed to the preservation of their "peculiar institution" than the Democrats. The maintenance of party ties with reform-minded Yankees, however, demanded that they do so in a roundabout way.[36]

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[35] Kruman, Parties and Politics, p. 20; Pegg, The Whig Party in North Carolina, p. 34; Richard P. McCormick, The Second American Party System: Party Formation in the Jacksonian Era (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1966), p. 206; Ronald P. Formisano, "Deferential-Participation Politics: The Early Republic's Political Culture, 1789-1840," American Political Science Review 68 (1974):486; Max R. Williams, "William A. Graham: North Carolina Whig Party Leader, 1804-1849" (Ph. D. dissertation, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1965), p. 265; Hamilton, Party Politics in North Carolina, p. 15.

[36] Daniel Walker Howe, The Political Culture of the American Whigs (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1979), p. 18; Kruman, Parties and Politics, pp. 58-59; Wagstaff, State Rights and Political Parties, p. 69; Ashworth, "Agrarians" and "Aristocrats", p. 199.

In October 1834, Mangum believed that southerners had little to fear from northern abolitionists, that the tariff represented a greater threat to southern liberties. He would soon rethink the issue. The increasing number of anti-slavery petitions reaching congress in the mid-1830s left the southern wing ill at ease. As the senate began its December 1835 proceedings, the question of what to do with these factious petitions had again enveloped the body. On a related matter, Andrew Jackson asked congress in his annual message to limit the ability of abolitionists to send their "incendiary publications" through the United States mail, in effect goading the legislature to action. John Calhoun took the bait, calling for the establishment of a special select committee to review the question. Willie Mangum responded as both partisan and pragmatist. He told his friend Calhoun that "he was unable to lash himself into any excitement on the subject," and that "he had never been able to apprehend those dangerous results which others seemed to fear." Besides, he added, the government had no right to stop these mailings. Extending a hand to his northern allies, he attested to their overall "soundness" on the slavery issue and scolded his fellow southerners for suggesting that abolitionism was anything other than a fringe movement. He concluded with a vintage display of pragmatic reasoning. When a second senator suggested they refer the matter to the Committee on the Post Office and Post Roads, Mangum responded that it was too busy attending to important issues to concern itself with this one. If his colleague insisted on sending it to committee, he went on, then let it be reviewed by the Judiciary Committee, one safely ensconced with men Mangum knew and trusted. But Calhoun refused to yield. He eventually won over the senate, which created

a special committee that included Calhoun as chair, Lewis F. Linn of Missouri, John Davis of Massachusetts, John P. King of Georgia, and Willie Mangum.[37]

On February 4, 1836, John Calhoun, speaking for the minority of his special select committee, read a report to the Senate. He also introduced a bill that would outlaw the postal transmission of "any pamphlet, newspaper, handbill, or other paper, printed or written, or pictorial representation" about slavery to areas that prohibited the circulation of such literature. After all five sections were read into the record, Linn, King, and Davis rose in turn to offer their objections to various parts of the proposal. Mangum alone among the committee members listened to the report without comment, other than ordering that the senate print five thousand copies each of the report and the bill.[38]

Mangum's change of heart can be seen as a function of his utilitarian approach to politics and policy. On the surface, his support of Calhoun's draconian bill seems to contradict his earlier assertions that these so-called "incendiary publications" were nothing of the sort and that the federal government had no power to prevent their dissemination. However, his remarks in December 1834 were made in response to something Andrew Jackson had said. Mangum's dislike for the president reflexively led him to take an opposing view. Once cornered in a committee room by the persuasive Calhoun, a man

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[37] All quotes from, United States Congress, Register of Debates in Congress, 24th Cong., 1st sess., pp. 12-13, 26-33; See also, Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 2:214; William J. Cooper, Jr, The South and the Politics of Slavery, 1828-1856 (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1978), pp. 91-92.

[38] United States Congress, Register of Debates in Congress, 24th Cong., 1st sess., pp. 383-86.

whom he regarded as an intellectual giant, Mangum was induced to see the wisdom of safeguarding the beleaguered southern institution. As for the inability of the federal government to act on the matter, Calhoun's bill promised to grant the government that right. At this phase of his career, Mangum appeared to be more southern than Whig.

Curiously, that same month Mangum fulfilled a pledge he made sometime earlier to present a petition calling for the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia. Honor bound to give the North Carolina Society of Friends their due, Mangum offered the memorial on February 19, 1836. The scene recalled an incident from March 1832, when he presented a memorial from a group of citizens from Granville County requesting the senate recharter the Second Bank of the United States. In both episodes Mangum acted opposite to his political position but consistent with his principles. In spite of his differences with the Quakers and the citizens of Granville, the democrat Mangum saw his role in republican society clearly. He represented them. Until those same constituents decided otherwise, he would continue to do so, instructions to the contrary not withstanding.[39]

Fortunately for Mangum, the request sent in by the Quakers was a rarity. Most North Carolinians, Mangum included, supported the institution of slavery. He represented them unhesitatingly. His next chance to do so came as congress was debating what to do with the increasing number of anti-slavery petitions reaching the floor. Mangum discovered a parliamentarian device that set the precedent for senate inaction. On March

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[39] United States Congress, The Congressional Globe, 24th Cong., 1st sess., p. 176.

16, 1836, Daniel Webster, following the usual procedure, motioned that several petitions demanding the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia be sent to the appropriate committee. Breaking with the established pattern, however, Mangum sprang to his feet and moved the petitions not be received. He then called for a vote. Next, Benjamin Watkins Leigh of Virginia moved that Mangum's motion be tabled. This the senate did unanimously. Thereafter, the senate dealt with subsequent petitions in the same fashion. As long as pragmatists like Mangum dominated the upper chamber abolitionists would remain "gagged."[40]

The emergence of abolitionist societies in the North and the bloody rebellions of Nat Turner and others bondsmen in the South led men like Mangum gradually to develop a siege mentality. What he had once considered a chimera was now real. On April 8, 1836, Mangum lashed out at fellow Tar Heel Bedford Brown for failing to recognize the threat northern abolitionism posed to the southern way of life. From his seat in the senate, Mangum accused Brown of "dividing the South by crying, 'all's well,' while the storm was rushing over their heads."[41] He also said that abolitionism had found its way into northern institutions of higher learning and dutifully advised southerners to send their sons to southern universities. How much of what he said was sincere and how much was partisan rhetoric is unclear. What is clear is that folks in North Carolina began to see him

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[40] Charles M. Wiltse, John C. Calhoun, Nullifier, 1829-1839 (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1949), p. 280; Glyndon G. Van Deusen, The Jacksonian Era: 1828-1848 (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1959), p. 108.

[41] United States Congress, Register of Debates in Congress, 24th Cong., 1st sess., pp. 1109-16.

as a defender of their "peculiar institution." More important, they came to see key Democrats as abolitionists. Preparing for the presidential election of 1836, Priestly asked his brother to locate evidence that proved Martin Van Buren had opposed the extension of slavery during the Missouri compromise debate of 1820. Throughout the South Whigs pursued the strategy of exaggerating the vice president's tenuous link to the anti-slavery crusade.[42]

Mangum knew that the slavery issue had the potential to destroy the new Whig alliance. From its inception the Whig Party attracted more reform-minded voters than the Democrats. Divisions within the national organization were insurmountable. As a result, southern Whigs chose to pursue twin strategies of delay and misdirection. The first element involved keeping the issue out of the spotlight. The "gag rule" satisfied that. The second called the Whigs to divert public attention away from slavery and onto other issues, like internal improvements and distribution. It also called for them to step up their attacks on Andrew Jackson.[43] Sometimes the slavery issue cropped up unexpectedly, as in the summer of 1836 when the newly independent Republic of Texas petitioned the United States Senate for formal recognition. The former Mexican state was home to thousands of slaveholders, giving northerners already afraid of alienating the Mexican government

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[42] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 2:444, 449; Cooper, The South and the Politics of Slavery, pp. 74-75; Kruman, Parties and Politics, p. 20.

[43] David J. Russo, "The Major Political Issues of the Jacksonian Period and the Development of Party Loyalty in Congress, 1830-1840," Transactions of the American Philosophical Society 62 (1972):18-19, 24; Harry L. Watson, Liberty and Power: The Politics of Jacksonian America (New York: Hill and Wang, 1990), p. 9.

another reason to oppose the measure. Mangum thought it unwise to resurrect the slavery issue over Texas, telling his wife he was "utterly opposed to risking the peace of the country for outlaws & adventurers."[44] The debate over Texas soon subsided, and Southern Whigs, breathing a sigh of relief, resumed their diversionary attacks on Jackson.

In addition to the nettlesome issue of slavery and the disingenuous issue of Andrew Jackson, North Carolina Whigs during the years 1835 and 1836 began emphasizing three more. Distributing the revenue derived from the sale of federal lands to the states from which the land had been taken was a popular notion with most North Carolinians. While Democrats argued that the scheme was unconstitutional and the depletion of the treasury surplus would probably lead to higher tariffs, the Whigs favored distribution. Willie Mangum and David Swain assumed the helm, convincing party officials that this would be the issue that unified east and west. They were correct. Voters responded enthusiastically, particularly in the west, where Jackson's pocket veto of Clay's 1836 version of the bill cost him dearly.[45]

One reason that distribution was so popular in the west was because it promised to generate the money needed to pay for rail lines, roads, and public schools without raising taxes. With that in mind, North Carolina Whig leaders linked distribution and internal improvements in the minds of voters with great success. Again, the Whigs found themselves moving in the direction of an activist state, causing great concern among

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[44] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 2:437.

[45] William S. Hoffman, "The Downfall of the Democrats: The Reaction to Jacksonian Land Policy," North Carolina Historical Review 33 (1956):167-68, 177-80.

easterners committed to preserving the traditional plantation economy. David L. Swain offered a new insight to their timeworn arguments by suggesting that new transportation networks would reduce the cost of moving freight thus increasing the profitability of staple-crop farming. Planters also believed that they would pay a greater share of the increased tax burden likely to come with massive state spending. Proceeds from federal distribution plans, the Whigs countered, would take the place of higher taxes. Still, North Carolinians were slow to approve railroad construction and other expensive projects as the debate over how all this was to be financed continued well into the 1850s. The debate did, however, give the Whigs another unifying issue and helped define them on the state level.[46]

Banking and other finance related issues provided them with yet another common bond. Here, however, Mangum lagged behind fellow Whigs who wished to expand the role of the state in chartering corporations. He shared his admittedly anachronistic opinions with the senate, saying that he "believed that all these wealthy corporate institutions were inimical to a spirit of liberty." "Banks, railroads, stock companies of every description, might be useful," he conceded, but he was "opposed to them all, because . . . they were inconsistent with the true spirit of liberty."[47] The senator's Jeffersonian soliloquy not withstanding, North Carolina Whigs, and for that matter

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[46] Jeffrey, State Parties and National Politics, p. 69; Harry L. Watson, "Squire Oldway and his Friends: Opposition to Internal Improvements in Antebellum North Carolina," North Carolina Historical Review 54 (1977):109-111; Kruman, Parties and Politics, pp. 7-9, 22-23.

[47] United States Congress, The Congressional Globe, 24th Cong., 1st sess., p. 326.

Mangum himself, generally supported easing restrictions on corporate charters. They believed that granting special privileges to the few ultimately meant greater economic freedom and opportunity for the many.[48]

In the national arena, Willie Mangum continued to etch out an identity for the Whigs beyond simply that of the anti-Jackson party. When Democratic Senator Thomas Hart Benton of Missouri introduced a bill designed to channel the treasury surplus into building up the nation's defenses Mangum and the Whigs, who had earmarked the funds for distribution, responded with alarm. Benton argued that a long-standing dispute between France and the United States over France's failure to pay a five million dollar reparations claims dating back to the Napoleonic Wars had reached a standstill. The United States, he reasoned, had no alternative but to prepare for war. On February 3, 1836, Mangum replied to the Democrats in a speech to the senate. This saber rattling, he contended, was a ruse designed to divert funds from the people of the individual states to "the general Government, and its office holders, friends, and retainers."[49]

In 1831 France and the United States concluded their treaty of reparations. As of December 1834, however, the French had yet to pay anything. That month Andrew

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[48] Herbert Ershkowitz and William G. Shade, "Consensus or Conflict? Political Behavior in the State Legislatures during the Jacksonian Era," Journal of American History 58 (1971):596-97; Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 2:205; Russo, "The Major Political Issues of the Jacksonian Period," pp. 4, 28; Kruman, Parties and Politics, pp. 24-25.

[49] Quote from, Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 5:602; See also, Hoffman, Andrew Jackson and North Carolina Politics, p. 98; Wiltse, John C. Calhoun, pp. 240-42; Van Deusen, The Jacksonian Era, pp. 82, 101-103.

Jackson set Democratic Party policy by suggesting that the American government begin seizing French property and continue to do so until they agree to abide by the agreement. That proposal was then sent to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee where Mangum, Clay, and three other members considered what to do next while the rest of congress and newspaper editors across the nation spoke of war. On January 6, 1835, Clay submitted their findings. In essence the committee agreed with the president that the United States had legitimate grievances with the French, but disagreed over how they should be redressed. They advised the senate to exhaust all peaceful means of settlement before granting Jackson sweeping authority to seize French holdings. Thus, the Whig position was born.[50]

Mangum confirmed that position in his speech. He also accused Benton of using the French spoliation controversy to carry out his partisan agenda, specifically, looting the treasury to such an extent that there would be nothing left for Whigs to distribute. Mangum wanted to expose Benton while simultaneously extolling his own party and its policies. Calling up familiar themes of antipartyism, republicanism and states rights, he also used the time to attack the doctrine of instructions and portray Jackson as dictatorial and corrupt. Surplus money from the treasury, the North Carolinian asserted, should be awarded to the states to be used to construct schools and railroads, not enrich bankers and build up the party's war chest, as the president most certainly intended. Relative to the issue of executive tyranny was the question of instructions and whether Mangum should

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[50] Van Deusen, The Jacksonian Era, pp. 82, 101-103; Wiltse, John C. Calhoun, pp. 240-42; Hoffman, Andrew Jackson and North Carolina Politics, p. 98.

ignore those given him by the legislature. He insisted that he would not give in to their demands. "If the Senate shall be permanently broken, either by direct action upon it," he said in reference to Benton's appropriations bill, "or indirectly through the State Legislatures, one of the great safeguards of liberty will have fallen." Again, Mangum repeated his contention that the instructions debate was something far more profound than his enemies wanted to let on. To him, nothing less than the Republic itself was at stake.[51]

"We here generally approve of your course," William Roane of Burke County wrote Mangum, "I am a republican of the old school. I loath standing armies & extensive navies."[52] A flurry of notes of support and encouragement similar to this followed Mangum's speech. Both county-level and high-ranking state officials sent their well wishes.[53] Still, none seemed to reassure the despondent senator. On May 22, 1836, he confided to his wife that he was "sick and tired of [his] daily attendance on Congress. - The business is dull & uninteresting, and every thing is going wrong, and almost to ruin."[54] The Whigs had reached an impasse. Unwilling to force their man out and unable to prevent his expulsion, they could only wait for the next election.[55] Fortunately for them, their rivals were just as uncertain about their next move. "I have been not a little perplexed about what should be done with the Mangum case," Democrat Weldon R.

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[51] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 5:598.

[52] Ibid., 2:443.

[53] Ibid., 2:412, 474-75.

[54] Ibid., 2:437.

[55] Raleigh Register, 21 July 1836.

Edwards wrote late in 1835. Six months later he and the Democrats were no closer to an answer, they only knew that Mangum's refusal to comply with his instructions would be the major issue in the first statewide campaign for governor.[56]

The unusually long session partly explains Mangum's dark mood; the uncertain fate of his fellow Whigs explains it better still. Senators Theodore Frelinghuysen and Samuel Southard, both of New Jersey, Peleg Sprague of Maine, and Thomas Ewing of Ohio, all received, and voted contrary to, unwelcome instructions from their respective state assemblies. Of the four, only Sprague was driven from office. He remained defiant, however, never acknowledging the legitimacy of the doctrine. Senator John Tyler of Virginia, on the other hand, did. When his state legislature instructed him to vote in favor of the same expunging resolution Mangum had rejected, Tyler felt he had no alternative but to step down, which he did on February 29, 1836. Weston R. Gales of the Raleigh Register spoke for the Whigs when he wrote that Tyler had "egregiously erred" in resigning. Not only did it represent the "strongest rebuke of Whig principles," Tyler's exit had thinned their ranks in the senate and denied them a vehement proponent of states rights and likely vice presidential nominee.[57] Mangum was now the lone member of the senate willing to disobey instructions on the expunging question.[58]

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[56] Weldon Edwards to Romulus Saunders, 5 October 1835, Katherine Clark Pendleton Papers, North Carolina Department of Archives and History, Raleigh, North Carolina.

[57] Raleigh Register, 8, 26 March 1836.

[58] Russo, "The Major Political Issues of the Jacksonian Period," p. 34; William S. Hoffman, "The Election of 1836 in North Carolina," North Carolina Historical Review 32 (1955): 40.

The long-anticipated North Carolina gubernatorial and presidential elections of 1836 were turning points for Mangum and the Whig Party. As a frequent commentator on the unfolding events, Mangum offers unique insights into the workings of this much studied election. His opinions of the candidates and issues seemed to change from month to month. All that remained constant was his ever-present hand guiding state and national races. He made his presence known in corridors, cloakrooms and taverns and on the front pages of newspapers from as far away as New York City to nearby Oxford, North Carolina. Always his compatriots recognized him as an important player in their national pastime -- "the presidential game."[59]

Between December 1833 and December 1834, Mangum went from supporting one presidential candidate to another, from deep despair over his party's chances to faint hope some miracle would change the inevitable. This was vintage Mangum: Forever hedging his bets, waiting to see how the party and the public would react to events, always ready to side with the most popular, the most moderate alternative. Late in 1833 he still regarded his friend Calhoun as the man worthiest of the presidency, though equally confident the nullifier could never win. He therefore proposed that Whigs in his state support party stalwart Henry Clay or John McLean of Ohio. Both men appeared sufficiently moderate and both had national appeal. Personally, Mangum leaned toward Clay, more heavily still after being reassured that the Kentuckian would not "tread upon

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[59] Richard P. McCormick, The Presidential Game: The Origins of American Presidential Politics (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), p. 171; Richard P. McCormick, "Was There a 'Whig Strategy' in 1836?" Journal of the Early Republic 4 (1984):55.

our principles," meaning states rights.[60] In February of 1834, Mangum was still committed to Clay and, more importantly, vehemently opposed to Martin Van Buren. He was even willing to back someone wholly unsuited to the job to defeat the New Yorker. "Many in North Carolina are looking to Judge McLean," he wrote Duncan Cameron, "it is a miserable choice - weak in ability, & weaker in purpose, he is in almost every way unfit - yet I [would] prefer him to V.B."[61] Meanwhile, Mangum worked unseen to nominate a man qualified to serve and capable of winning. Working with Senator William Campbell Preston of South Carolina, a man with whom he would build a lifelong friendship, Mangum scuttled a Calhoun-for-president movement brewing among southern states rights Whigs. The thought of such "madness and folly" clearly worried the moderate. Buttonholing its leaders in the seclusion of boardinghouses and darkened street corners and using "violent, almost indecent denunciation," he put a stop to the Calhoun movement.[62]

Mangum continued with his quiet indecision into the fall and early winter of 1834. While touring the New England and mid-Atlantic states he became convinced that cooperation between the regions was impossible. His loss of hope is captured in letters home. Clay had fallen from favor, a casualty of Mangum's plan to lead former nullifiers into the Whig camp. His association with the tariff had rendered him unacceptable.

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[60] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 2:52.

[61] Ibid., 2:75.

[62] Willie P. Mangum to Henry Clay, 26 March 1838, Clay Mss., Manuscripts Department, Lilly Library, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana.

Calhoun remained so for the same reasons Mangum had cited the previous December. And although Mangum preferred Calhoun to the rest of the field, "practicality, not just principles," he wrote John Beard, "should determine our course." Only McLean, a man Mangum found lacking in basic principles, remained. "When I think of him, I think of a Gentleman in wooden patterns on a pedestal of ice, who moves N[orth] S[outh] East or West on the slightest external pressure." Even with McLean at the top of the ticket, Mangum conceded, Van Buren was sure to win.[63]

By December 1834 Mangum had settled on "a choice of evils" and threw his support to Hugh Lawson White of Tennessee.[64] The move to nominate White as the Whig candidate for president had been gaining momentum in the south for some time. Now Mangum was ready to join the movement. On December 28, 1834, after speaking with friends and allowing his decision to sink in, Mangum began to express hope. "If there is unity of action," he wrote William Graham, "we might yet prevail."[65] The following February he showed more enthusiasm. "I go for White decidedly & without misgiving," Mangum informed Daniel M. Barringer, "I think he will make a good, honest, firm, & reasonably intelligent President." Mangum added that White had all the qualities and virtues southerners looked for in a leader. The senator from Tennessee represented "the people," not "office holders," Mangum's common pejorative for the Democrats. White

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[63] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 2:217.

[64] Ibid., 2:247.

[65] Ibid., 2:261.

was "anti kitchen & anti official corps," and, best of all, he was a southerner.[66] After a year of wandering from one hopeful to another, Mangum had made a decision. It had been reached after countless closed-door meetings involving secretive conversations between powerful officials. The full story of what Mangum called "the secret history of '34," the story of how he and a handful of North Carolina Whigs steered their party away from extremism and toward moderation, can never be fully told; the details died with the participants. What is known is that any semblance of genuine democracy was left behind in a blind rush to save democracy.[67]

In May 1835 Democrats from around the country gathered in Baltimore and nominated Martin Van Buren to be their presidential candidate in the upcoming election. By the standards of the day, the convention had functioned smoothly. In contrast, the national Whig Party, in realty a loose amalgam of state organizations, did not even hold a national convention. Instead, local and state meetings produced three candidates, each representing a different region and a different vision of Whiggery. Nominated by a group of Massachusetts legislators, Daniel Webster eventually appeared on presidential ballots throughout New England. William Henry Harrison of Ohio won his nomination from the Pennsylvania state convention and was regarded as the western candidate. First put forward by a caucus of Tennessee legislators, Hugh Lawson White emerged as the favorite

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[66] Willie P. Mangum to Daniel Moreau Barringer, 15 February 1835, Daniel Moreau Barringer Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

[67] Willie P. Mangum to Henry Clay, 26 March 1838, Clay Mss., Manuscripts Department, Lilly Library, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana.

son of the South. What little national coordination the Whigs did have went into convincing Henry Clay to keep his hat out of the ring. Nevertheless, friendly editors and local commentators considered Clay and other nationally-renowned Whigs as presidential timber.[68] Major Noah of the New York Evening Star recommended that the Whigs nominate Willie Mangum for president. Washington, D.C. journalist Anne Newport Royall told Mangum that his name had been mentioned in connection with the second spot on the White ticket. North Carolina editors both for and against the senator proudly reported these tributes to their readers. But for the most part, Mangum preferred to work outside of the intense glare of public scrutiny and resisted such flattering entreaties.[69]

Stepping out of the shadows of anonymity and party intrigue, Mangum campaigned publicly for White, who officially became the presidential nominee of the North Carolina Whig Party in December 1835. Long before the state convention, Mangum had helped to organize local rallies and congressional campaigns as well as the convention itself. His work earned him the admiration of legions of party officials, many of whom supported an effort to nominate Mangum to be the next governor, a prospect that caused Democrats to salivate. Mangum knew that he had become too controversial a figure to withstand a statewide popular election and declined the invitation. The Democrats would still have to

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[68] Joel Silbey, "Election of 1836," in Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., Fred L. Israel, and William P. Hansen, eds., History of American Presidential Elections: 1789-1968, 4 vols. (New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1971), 1:580, 584-85, 588-89, 593-94; Hoffman, "The Election of 1836," pp. 31, 37.

[69] Western Carolinian (Salisbury), 6 December 1834; North Carolina Standard (Raleigh), 5 December 1834; Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 2:361-62.

take on Mangum indirectly through local races for assemblymen. At their state convention the Whigs made Edward Dudley their gubernatorial nominee and the race was on. Again, Mangum took the initiative coordinating the North Carolina Whigs. Collecting speeches and franking them to various parts of the state, appearing at local assemblies, and raising money for floundering Whig papers, Willie Mangum involved himself at every level and in every facet of the organization.[70]

Southern supporters of White paraded their man as a friend of republics, an enemy of political parties, and a southerner. North Carolina lawmakers took pride in announcing that they had nominated White "not in their character as legislators," as they alleged the Democrats had done with Van Buren, "but as private individuals."[71] Stressing their minority status, the Whigs made a virtue of weakness. The "Little Magician" and the "Party," as Mangum liked to call the nominee and his party, behaved as if politics was a conjurer's parlor trick; smoke and mirrors, not truth and rectitude, guided events. They had stained the fabric of the republic with their conventions and campaigns. All this talk of principle, however, hid a pragmatic reality. The Whigs campaigned just as hard, if not harder, than the Democrats. Harrison personally canvassed the nation on a three-month speaking tour, something no presidential candidate had done before. Their failure to hold

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[70] Pegg, The Whig Party in North Carolina, pp. 22, 33, 42-43, 93; Julian McIver Pleasants, "The Political Career of Willie Person Mangum, 1828-1840," (M.A. thesis, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1962), p. 57; Hamilton, Party Politics in North Carolina, pp. 35, 38-39; North Carolina Standard (Raleigh), 21 December 1835; Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 2:323, 377, 401-402, 409-11, 416-17, 422, 429.

[71] Raleigh Register, 29 December 1835.

a national convention was more a sign of discord and confusion than it was evidence of Whig righteousness. From such a weak vantage, the Whigs had no choice but to undertake this style of offensive.[72]

The very presence of the New Yorker in Washington symbolized for Mangum a decline in public virtue. "Are we to be led by a fox?" he once asked, implying great republics should be commanded by majestic beasts, like lions or eagles, not by creatures known for their cunning and guile, like the fox, or Martin Van Buren.[73] Whigs in Raleigh portrayed Van Buren as the antithesis of a republican, even going so far as to exaggerate his ties to that most unrepublican institution, the Catholic Church. In April 1836, John Barnett of Person County requested that Mangum forward "any document that will prove Mr. Vanburian [sic] has any leaning toward the Roman Catholicks [sic]."[74] Whigs in every region used virtually the same tactics and similar rhetoric to prove that the Democrats were base and immoral.[75]

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[72] Silbey, "Election of 1836," pp. 585-87, 595; William G. Shade, "Political Pluralism and Party Development: The Creation of a Modern Party System, 1815-1852," in Paul Kleppner, Walter Dean Burnham, Ronald P. Formisano, Samuel P. Hayes, Richard Jensen, and William G. Shade, eds., The Evolution of American Electoral Systems (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1981), p. 81; McCormick, "Was There a 'Whig Strategy' in 1836?" pp. 47, 67.

[73] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 5:595-96.

[74] Ibid., 2:430.

[75] Jonathan M. Atkins, "The Presidential Candidacy of Hugh Lawson White in Tennessee, 1832-1836," The Journal of Southern History 58 (1992):39-39; Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 2:75.

In the South, Whigs injected a regional spin in the campaign against Van Buren. At first, they tried to tie the vice president to abolitionism and the efforts to prohibit slavery in the District of Columbia and enfranchise free blacks in New York. They said he stood for all the programs every true southerner opposed, like federally funded internal improvements and the Tariff of 1828. Even his support of DeWitt Clinton over Virginian James Madison in 1812 was given as evidence that he was hostile to the South.[76] To North Carolina Whigs, Martin Van Buren was the "Northern" candidate. Edward Dudley captured this sentiment when he said, "Mr. Van Buren is not one of us. He is a northern man . . . in soul, in principle, and in action."[77]

Hugh Lawson White, in contrast to Van Buren, was the "Southern" candidate. Having only recently discarded the label "Jacksonian," the antipartisan White disliked being called a "Whig." He was the candidate selected by popular conventions and town meetings who promised to protect the rights of the states and defend southern liberty. The Hillsborough Recorder, a Whig paper, featured the banner, "Republican Whig Ticket: The People Against the Caucus," over the names of Hugh White and his running mate John Tyler. Above the names of Van Buren and Richard M. Johnson, the Democratic vice presidential candidate, appeared the loaded phrase, "Baltimore Nomination," nothing more. These were the only names on the state's presidential ballot, leaving North Carolina

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[76] Hoffman, "The Election of 1836," p. 46.

[77] Quoted in, Cooper, The South and the Politics of Slavery, p. 82.

Whigs to describe the contest as one pitting a southern statesman against a northern spoilsman.[78]

In August 1836, North Carolina voters went to the polls and selected Edward Dudley to be their governor. A few Whig leaders believed that this portended a victory for White in the November balloting. Mangum took it to be an endorsement of his refusal to obey instructions. Others were less sanguine. State races had been run on issues separate from those raised in the national contest. The popularity of Dudley and the Whig record on distribution won countless votes for their party. So too did local issues. Whigs and Democrats both made an issue of Mangum. The former attacked their rivals as shameless partisans bent on removing a faithful public servant from his post while the latter suggested that Mangum had scorned the people by not acceding to the instructions. Voter turnout in August topped 67 percent, a fact that helped the increasingly popular Whigs, whose leaders hoped that Dudley's popularity and his plurality of four thousand votes would carry over into the Fall.[79]

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[78] William J. Cooper, Jr., Liberty and Slavery: Southern Politics to 1860 (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1983), pp. 187, 191; Atkins, "The Presidential Candidacy of Hugh Lawson White," p. 51; McCormick, "Was There a 'Whig Strategy' in 1836?" p. 62; Kruman, Parties and Politics, p. 20; Brown, Politics and Statesmanship, p. 160; Hillsborough Recorder, 14 October 1836.

[79] Willie P. Mangum to Henry Clay, 26 March 1838, Clay Mss., Manuscripts Department, Lilly Library, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana; Hillsborough Recorder, 14 October 1836; Hoffman, "Willie P. Mangum and the Whig Revival of the Doctrine of Instructions," pp. 351-52; Burton W. Folsom, II, "Party Formation & Development in Jacksonian America: The Old South," Journal of American Studies 7 (1973):224; Pegg, The Whig Party in North Carolina, pp. 62-63.

Mangum's immediate concern was not the gubernatorial race but the many local contests to fill the General Assembly. They would decide his future. Results from counties and districts began drifting into Raleigh in mid-August. Because election days varied from one precinct to the next, the outcome remained uncertain for weeks after the last polling place had closed its doors. Deficient communication and transportation networks only added to the delay. In September Mangum decided to stand or fall with the popular vote. If the people turned out a Whig majority he would remain, if they spoke otherwise he would retire. Early returns pointed to a Whig triumph, giving the senator a reason to proclaim his vindication. He had spoken too soon. The final tally left the Whigs with a one-seat advantage in the senate and the Democrats with a one-seat majority in Commons; neither party controlled the legislature. Willie Mangum's future was still in doubt.[80]

Martin Van Buren, on the other hand, won a clear victory in the November election. He won 170 of the 294 available electoral votes, including most of those in the South. White captured his home state of Tennessee and Georgia. North Carolina awarded its fifteen electoral votes to the New Yorker. Van Buren and Johnson took 26,910 popular votes, while White and Tyler garnered 23,626. Voters in Orange County joined the rest of the state by handing a slim majority to Van Buren. Voter participation dropped to 53 percent, an indication that many of the North Carolinians who had voted for Dudley in

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[80] Hillsborough Recorder, 14 October 1836; Kruman, Parties and Politics, p. 21.

August refused to give their votes to White and maybe send the election into the House of Representatives.[81]

In 1836 South Carolina was the only state to award its electoral votes through the state legislature rather than by popular vote. There the slates that appeared in the other states had no bearing. Legislators were free to choose whomever they pleased, regardless of whether or not the recipient was in contention elsewhere. Unlike many of their neighbors, South Carolinians had never been enthusiastic about White because he had sided with the administration during the Force Bill debate. Van Buren had even less support. But by the time state legislators had converged on Columbia to award their state's eleven electoral votes, Van Buren had already won. The only thing left for them to do was to lodge a protest, either by handing in a blank ballot or rewarding an old friend, preferably a states rights southerner. After quickly abandoning the first option, the assemblage weighed the merits of several contenders and decided upon their neighbor to the north, Willie Mangum. The Tar Heel enjoyed close friendships with both their Senators -- Calhoun and Preston -- and, unlike White, stood by the former during the Force Bill crisis. And although he did not always support Calhoun's policies, Mangum could always be trusted to express his dissent honestly. This meant a great deal to Calhoun, who held the legislature in his iron grip: "When John C. Calhoun took snuff," one historian joked,

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[81] Silbey, "Election of 1836," pp. 595-96, 640; McCormick, "Was There a 'Whig Strategy' in 1836?" p. 68; Kruman, Parties and Politics, p. 21; Raleigh Star, 17 November 1836; Hoffman, "The Election of 1836," p. 51.

"South Carolina sneezed." Sneeze they did, handing Mangum and Tyler their eleven votes in December 1836.[82]

The movement to elect White, though a failure, strengthened the Whig Party in the South. Despite their defeat, Whigs from all over the country made significant headway in their drive to become a truly national organization. Two-party politics became a reality in North Carolina and across the nation. Statewide elections for governor and president meant statewide coordination and organization. Democrats suffered a severe blow in the South, losing 18 percent of their support in the slave states over the previous presidential election. William Henry Harrison, who won electoral votes in every region, emerged as a national figure and a likely front runner for the next presidential election. Willie Mangum also stood taller. Endorsements from the northern press and the South Carolina General Assembly showed his appeal knew no regional boundary. His career seemed ready to soar. Then fate stepped in and brought him back to earth.[83]

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[82] Quote taken from, William W. Freehling, The Road to Disunion: Secessionists at Bay, 1776-1854 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), p. 345; See also, Samuel Gaillard Stoney, ed., "Memoirs of Frederick Adolphus Porcher," The South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine 46 (1946):33; Brown, Politics and Statesmanship, p. 6; Claude G. Bowers, Party Battles in the Jackson Period (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1922), p. 433; W. Edwin Hemphill, Robert L. Meriwether, and Clyde Wilson, eds., The Papers of John C. Calhoun, 20 vols. (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1959-1991), 13:257; Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 5:763; South Carolina General Assembly, Resolutions 1836, no. 13, South Carolina Department of Archives and History, Columbia, South Carolina.

[83] Harrison won Vermont, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, Ohio, Indiana, and Kentucky. Silbey, "Election of 1836," pp. 594-97, 640; McCormick, "Was There a 'Whig Strategy' in 1836?" p. 68; Kruman, Parties and Politics, p. 20; Lynn L. Marshall, "The Strange Stillbirth of the Whig Party," American Historical Review 72 (1967):463.

Just days before the presidential election in November, one Whig member of the state legislature took ill and had to resign and a second died. The governor called for a special election to fill the two vacancies. Sensing defeat, Mangum toyed with the idea of resigning so as to avoid being an issue in yet another election, a move William Graham and the other Whig leaders thought premature. On November 4, 1836, Graham wrote Mangum to bolster his sagging confidence. He told the senator that the Whigs were counting on him to fight a good fight, to hold his ground and not let his party down. Mangum felt obliged to his party, and although he would just as soon step aside he knew there was more at stake than himself. So he waited. Later that month, just as the new session was about to start, the voters elected two more Democrats to the legislature. Mangum had held on as long as he could, but now the people had spoken. On November 26, 1836, after giving the matter "mature consideration," he fulfilled his promise to abide by the people's decision and handed in his resignation. He assured his friends that what he had done was in the best interests of the country and promised he would "not look back with any regrets."[84]

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[84] Quotes from, Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 2:474-75, 479-80. See also, Raleigh Register, 21, 29 November 1836; North Carolina, General Assembly, Journal of the House of Commons of North Carolina (Raleigh: State Printer, 1836), p. 276; John L. Cheney, Jr., ed., North Carolina Government, 1585-1974: A Narrative and Statistical History (Raleigh: North Carolina Department of the Secretary of State, 1975), p. 743; J.G. de Roulhac Hamilton, ed., The Papers of Thomas Ruffin, 4 vols. (Raleigh: Edwards and Broughton, 1918-1920), 2:163-64; Hoffman, "Willie P. Mangum and the Whig Revival of the Doctrine of Instructions," pp. 353-54; Hamilton, Party Politics in North Carolina, pp. 41-42; Clarence C. Norton, The Democratic Party in Ante-Bellum North Carolina, 1835-1861 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1930), p. 76.

"Judge Mangum sent in his resignation today," James Bryan informed his brother, "his weak & timid course has justly excited the indignation of the Whigs."[85] "It was with much regret I heard of your resignation," John Shackford, senate doorkeeper and Sergeant-at-arms, wrote Mangum, adding that seeing the senator "leaving the councills [sic] of the nation" caused him anguish.[86] Like Mangum's contemporaries, historians have offered different interpretations of the events leading to his resignation. William S. Hoffman, Mangum's most severe critic, saw the Judge as a grasping opportunist whose political ploy to "revival of the doctrine of instruction" had backfired.[87] Clement Eaton, on the other hand, lionized Mangum for his "remarkable display of moral courage."[88] Hoffman's arguments are problematic. He accepts the Democratic rhetoric of the 1830s with never a doubt. He failed to explore the nature of political alliances, contemporary images of partisan politics, or republican ideology. His arguments, in short, lack a subtle understanding of nineteenth-century political mentalite. For his part, Eaton romanticizes Mangum and misses his complex motivations.

Mangum best summarized the entire episode and his feelings about instructions years after he resigned. Late one March night in 1844, Mangum and his friend James T. Morehead, after declaring themselves "all duly sober," advised John M. Clayton that he

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[85] James West Bryan to his brother, 26 November 1836, Bryan Family Papers, Special Collections, Duke University Library, Durham, North Carolina.

[86] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 2:485.

[87] Hoffman, "Willie P. Mangum and the Whig Revival of the Doctrine of Instructions."

[88] Eaton, "Southern Senators and the Right of Instruction," p. 305.

"must obey instructions - the instructions of friends - They are imperative." "Those from our enemies," the pair offered, "we may disobey & damn, without breach of any moral or religious obligation." He believed his cause to be moral and just and that is why he acted as he did. Mangum joined the Whig Party for many reasons. One was his belief that they defended the constitution and morality better than the Democrats. He also saw the Whig Party as the best avenue to political power. So, both Hoffman and Eaton spoke the truth. Principles and pragmatism drove him to the Whigs, principles and pragmatism kept him in the fold.[89]

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[89] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 4:75.

CHAPTER 8
WALNUT HALL

"It was with infinite regret that after my arrival here, I was informed of your resignation," Senator John Crittenden wrote Willie Mangum from Washington, D.C., in December 1836. After scolding his former associate for giving in to his enemies, the Kentuckian asked if Mangum had any intention of visiting him that winter so the two could "walk over [our] old battle fields."[1] Someday maybe, Mangum probably thought to himself, but not in the foreseeable future. For now he would walk the tobacco and corn fields of his plantation near Red Mountain. For the foreseeable future he would devote more time to his family, catch up with his reading, tend to his horses, and renew his law practice. For the foreseeable future he would be spending his days and nights with friends and family at the plantation house he called Walnut Hall.

The lord of Walnut Hall carried himself with an aristocratic bearing common to the southern gentry. Standing just over six feet tall with a medium build, he cut an impressive figure. His clean-shaven face and dark hair, though receding, belied his advancing age. Late in 1844, as he approached his fifty-third birthday, one journalist noted that Mangum looked ten or fifteen years younger than his reported age. His fair complexion and stern

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[1] Henry Thomas Shanks, ed., The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 5 vols. (Raleigh: State Department of Archives and History, 1950-1956), 2:483-84.

countenance conveyed an air of command and dignity. One portrait painter who saw Mangum from the senate gallery wrote he "rather liked the looks of Mr. Mangum," and family lore has it that the senator possessed a magnetism women found appealing.[2]

Complementing Mangum's striking physical appearance was his habit of dress. Exceptionally well groomed, he liked to be seen wearing finely-tailored, neatly-pressed suits while sporting a silver-tipped mahogany walking stick engraved with his name. A silk top hat, silk handkerchiefs, silk gloves, and high shoes completed this carefully crafted look. Slightly more flamboyant in his choice of apparel than the average planter, Mangum took special pride in his outward appearance. Though he preferred to cover himself from head to toe in black, as most members of the gentry were inclined to do, Mangum would from time to time don a "raven green cloth coat" or "elastic green suspenders."[3] Despite lingering financial difficulties, he made frequent visits to clothiers in both North Carolina and Washington, D.C. to update his wardrobe. By the standards of his day, Mangum was uncommonly clean, bathing in cold water every morning and changing his linen daily.[4]

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[2] Quote from, The diary of Curran Swaim, 1852, Lyndon Swaim Papers, Special Collections, Duke University Library, Durham, North Carolina. See also, Jack Larkin, The Reshaping of Everyday Life, 1790-1840 (New York: Harper & Row, 1988), p. 152; Cleveland Plain Dealer, 25 June 1846; Hillsborough Recorder, 11 September 1861; Shirley Jones Mallard, "Marcus Harris Mangum: His Ancestors and His Descendants," North Carolina Collection, Durham County Public Library, Durham, North Carolina, p. 27.

[3] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 2:57, 155.

[4] Reminiscences of an unknown author, Willie P. Mangum Family Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.; Guion Griffis Johnson, Ante-Bellum North Carolina: A Social History (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1937), p. 90; Philip Greven, The Protestant Temperament: Patterns of Child-Rearing, Religious Experience,

Beneath his impressive physical and sartorial exterior was an equally striking personality. Almost universally regarded as a man of great integrity, frankness, and honor, Willie Mangum was well suited to his chosen profession. He seemed to treat all people the same way, whatever their social standing, age, or political affiliation. As a public speaker he won the acclaim of some of the best judges of his generation, many of whom commented on his mellifluous voice and superior powers of persuasion. His conversational talents surpassed his remarkable abilities as an orator, which may explain his predilection for back-room, face-to-face politics. An inexhaustible talker, Mangum also proved an attentive listener. He enjoyed discussing any number of subjects with friends or with fellow travelers on a stagecoach. Usually, talk would turn to politics, a subject Mangum could talk about for hours. After his children reached adulthood he would regale them with tales of past conquests or favor them with his insights into current affairs. Letters and speeches reveal him to be a man blessed with a healthy sense of humor. Even the official records of Congress include notations where Mangum was interrupted by the sustained laughter of his colleagues after he had delivered a customary bon mot. When directed at his opponents, Mangum's tongue could be caustic, his humor sarcastic. For the most part, however, Mangum exhibited a pleasant, generous nature. He rarely provoked anger or bitterness in those who knew him well. Intellectually, the North Carolinian appeared to be of above average intelligence, but far from brilliant. His writings show no evidence of profundity and reveal no complex theories. They do show

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and the Self in Early America (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1977), p. 303; Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 1:211; 5:751.

him to be familiar with literature, history, and the bible, and equipped with a capacity to judge people and foretell events.[5]

For the better part of his life, Willie Mangum enjoyed good health. Aside from regular complaints about constipation, an occasional cold, fever, or toothache, the Judge seemed fit. His digestive troubles may have been induced by his reluctance to eat vegetables. The self-professed carnivore quipped that greens were intended as food "for four-footed animals & not bipeds."[6] As a young man, he rose early each morning and did calisthenics, a habit that waned with time. Horseback riding gave him great pleasure while providing an invigorating form of exercise. Any benefits he may have derived from these activities were offset by his excessive fondness for alcohol. In the past, historians like Claude Bowers attributed Mangum's personal and professional decline to his alcohol abuse. Recent studies have suggested that the senator may not have been behaving out of the ordinary, that nineteenth-century Americans in general consumed large quantities of

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[5] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 4:41-42, 75, 347-48; 5:430, 433-35, 594, 645; Hillsborough Recorder, 11 September 1861; Stephen B. Weeks, "Willie Person Mangum," in Biographical History of North Carolina: From Colonial Times to the Present, Samuel A. Ashe, ed., 8 vols. (Greensboro: Charles L. Van Noppen, 1905-1917), 5:253-56; William A. Norwood to Samuel Willard Tillingham, 20 March 1840, William Norwood Tillingham Papers, Special Collections, Duke University Library, Durham, North Carolina; Unknown to Willie P. Mangum, 10 February 1835, Willie P. Mangum Family Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.; Martha Person Mangum, Diary, 8 June 1853, 8 January 1854, Willie P. Mangum Family Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.; Orlando Brown to John J. Crittenden, 11 February 1836, John Jordan Crittenden Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.; John B. Fry to John J. Crittenden, 25 September 1861, John Jordan Crittenden Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

[6] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 5:181.

alcohol. Mangum departed from the national trend, however, by being perceived as habitually intoxicated and unable to control himself. Displays of public drunkenness by men of his standing, especially at inappropriate times, were seen as signs of depravity and weakness. This apparent flaw, more than any of his other characteristics, helps explains why Mangum, who was otherwise highly regarded by both the public and his peers, rose only so far in American politics.[7]

Among southern males, drinking and conviviality were expected, even essential parts of their social routines. Alcohol flowed freely at most fraternal functions. For this reason, Mangum excelled in the company of other men. In his youth he did not seem to drink to excess and even condemned the practice. From an early age, however, he showed himself to be a connoisseur of fine wines and other spirits. As with his clothing, Mangum spent lavishly. Buying the best vintages, he decanted and served with the utmost care. He stocked his private reserve with the finest French brandy he could find and purchased wine by the case. Locally distilled spirits also satisfied his refined palate. One visitor to Walnut Hall noted the peculiar way in which Mangum downed the native stock. After filling his glass with Orange County apple brandy, he tossed in a lump of sugar. Mangum then drank it quickly and poured another, all the while chomping loudly on the sugar cube.

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[7] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 1:209; 3:428; Claude G. Bowers, Party Battles in the Jackson Period (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1922), pp. 271-72; W. J. Rorabaugh, The Alcoholic Republic: An American Tradition (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), pp. 7-10, 14-19; Johnson, Ante-Bellum North Carolina, p. 97; Larkin, The Reshaping of Everyday Life, p. 172.

His unfortunate guest missed much of what his host had to say because of the noise made by the crunching sugar cane.[8]

Little evidence exists to suggest that Mangum drank alone. During periods of solitude, the former senator amused himself in a variety of ways. First among his pastimes was reading. Mangum devoured books, newspapers, and journals. His tastes leaned toward nonfiction, primarily political tracts, biographies, and essays. The writings of Sir Edmund Burke left an impression on the senator and like scores of readers from his era he could cite James Boswell's Life of Samuel Johnson from memory. His modest home library featured works of fiction, including several plays by William Shakespeare as well as the novels of some lesser-known authors. Mangum's passion for literature and careless borrowing practices placed him at odds with the Librarian of Congress, who made repeated efforts to retrieve overdue books Mangum regretfully mislaid. He subscribed to several newspapers and legal journals to keep ahead in his two professions, politics and law.[9]

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[8] Bertram Wyatt-Brown, Southern Honor: Ethics & Behavior in the Old South (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), p. 278-79; Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 2:343; 3:406-407; Willie P. Mangum to Charity A. Mangum, 28 December 1845, Willie P. Mangum Family Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.; Willie P. Mangum to Mr. Webb, 11 June 1846, Willie P. Mangum Family Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.; Reminiscences of an unknown author, Willie P. Mangum Family Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

[9] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 1:211; 3:374; 5:201-202, 425; Librarian of Congress to Willie P. Mangum, 9 April 1845, Willie P. Mangum Family Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Mangum enjoyed spending his free time outdoors. Horseback riding and raising thoroughbreds gave him immeasurable pleasure. He attended horse shows with the intention of buying breeders and for a brief time fanaticized about leaving politics to become "a sportsman," raising herds of prizewinning colts and moving in the circles of the idle gentry. Such dreams never materialized. His love of competition, however, did lead him to play chess and draughts. Mangum possessed a nineteenth-century romantic's image of nature and wildlife and was especially drawn to birds. He often took long strolls on his property. One visitor recalled that on one such occasion Mangum brought along his violin, which he played as he walked. The Judge confided to his companion that "some of his happiest thoughts were conceived while drawing the bow across the instrument."[10] In 1841, Mangum purchased a piano for the express purpose that his daughters learn to play. In the evenings, one of them would give a recital for her appreciative parents. Sally, his firstborn, preferred reels, waltzes, and marches, while Martha, his second child, favored the livelier polka. Music soothed Mangum, who visited churches just to hear the "grand & solemn sounds" of the organ "mingle with a choir of human voices."[11]

Wandering into churches to hear music appears to have been the extent of Mangum's association with organized religion. For most of his life he professed Christian

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[10] Quote from, Reminiscences of an unknown author, Willie P. Mangum Family Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. See also, Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 2:105; 3:127, 143-44, 146-47.

[11] Quote from, Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 1:125-26. See also, ibid., 2:195; 3:88, 176; 4:232; 5:49, 244, 468.

beliefs without settling on a specific denomination. Like a large portion of the southern population, he did not attend Sunday services but maintained all of the outward trappings of religiosity. Mangum seemed more concerned with the status associated with a given church or religious icon than he did with the theological and spiritual aspects of the Christian faith. For example, he made a special point of purchasing a family bible bound in Moroccan leather with gilded trim so it could be displayed prominently at Walnut Hall. The weighty volume told visitors that they were in the home of good Christians of high respectability and material substance. Mangum did not, however, lack a spiritual side. His remarks about nature, for example, convey an element of pantheism, and he often spoke with transcendental appreciation of religious symbols and romantic love. Although, like many other Whigs, politically prejudiced against the Catholic Church, Mangum otherwise showed remarkable tolerance in his private utterances and deeds. He served on the board of trustees of a Baptist institution and considered enrolling one of his daughters in a Catholic boarding school. Charity Mangum worshipped as an Episcopalian and had some success convincing her husband to attend an occasional mass. As the most prestigious denomination in antebellum North Carolina and the Sunday gathering place of the most influential Whigs, it is almost certain that Mangum attended these services for social as well as spiritual reasons. On his deathbed he formally converted to the Episcopal church, safe in the knowledge that he would not have to attend services. For Mangum, associations like the Loyal Order of Masons and the Odd Fellows, two organizations to

which he did belong, offered the same social connections found in church but in fraternal settings he considered more congenial to his secular temperament.[12]

If Willie Mangum found spiritual comfort anywhere, it was in the company of his wife and children. Together he and Charity raised three daughters and one son to adulthood. Born in 1824, Sallie Alston Mangum would grow up to be the only one to marry. Her birth warmed the hearts of her mother and father, who, Sallie later claimed, gave her all the love and every material advantage she ever wanted. Martha Person Mangum, known affectionately as Pattie, was born four years after her sister Sallie. As an adult she held her father in reverence and mimicked many of his ideas and prejudices. A proud daughter of the south, she once advised her brother to develop his mind and body slowly "like the noble oak" of the American forests, not like the "frenchified tulips" covering the fields of Monarchical Europe.[13] In his later years, the dying Mangum relied heavily on Pattie for his basic needs and by all accounts she filled them without complaint. Upon her death she was laid to rest at the feet of her parents in a final act of utter devotion. The couple's third child, Catherine Davis Mangum, named for Willie's mother, died in infancy. Their fourth, Mary Sutherland Mangum was born in 1832. She too

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[12] Greven, The Protestant Temperament, pp. 298, 324; Wyatt-Brown, Southern Honor, p. xviii; Harry L. Watson, Jacksonian Politics and Community Conflict: The Emergence of the Second Party System in Cumberland County North Carolina (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1981), pp. 239, 242; Willie P. Mangum to Charity A. Mangum, 14 July 1846, Willie Person Mangum Papers, North Carolina Department of Archives and History, Raleigh, North Carolina; Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 1:125-26, 211; 3:299-300; 4:196-97, 389; 5:752, 762; Weeks, "Willie Person Mangum," 5:254, Johnson, Ante-Bellum North Carolina, pp. 101-102.

[13] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 5:275.

tended to her father during his final illness and, along with her sister Pattie, remained at Walnut Hall until their deaths in 1902. Like her two sisters, Mary read widely, studying political literature sent her by her father in order that she may discuss it with him upon his return home. Mangum believed that all his children were capable of comprehending and speaking frankly about such affairs and encouraged them to digest as much as they could.[14]

Though he claimed to love all his children equally, Mangum reserved a special place in his heart for his only son, William Preston Mangum. In 1837, an elated Willie Mangum heralded the news of his son's birth to his friends in Washington. "I have a fine boy born this summer," he informed John Crittenden, "He is the finest animal in this country." Ever the good Whig, Mangum pledged that his son would be the same. "As to his intellect, I know not, as to his political morals, strictly Whig."[15] Once he came of age Billy, or Willy -- diminutives used interchangeably by his family -- lived up to his father's tongue-in-cheek promise. In 1850, while Willie Mangum hammered out the details of the compromise measure being debated by congress, his thirteen-year-old son lobbied in Orange County to win friends for the bill. One neighborhood girl merited special attention. The infatuated teenager believed that if he won her affection she would

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[14] Ariana Holliday Mangum, "A Short History of the Mangum Family," North Carolina Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, North Carolina, pp. 8-10; Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 5:230-31, 330, 760, 757; Martha Person Mangum, Diary, 13 July 1853, 23 October 1853, Willie P. Mangum Family Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.; Sallie Mangum to Charity A. Mangum, 4 January 1860, Willie P. Mangum Family Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

[15] Willie Mangum to John Crittenden, 1837, miscellaneous item, University of Kentucky Libraries, Division of Special Collections and Archives, University of Kentucky, Lexington, Kentucky.

come around to his point of view. By the time he entered the University of North Carolina, William had shown himself to be a loyal southerner. In 1856, he berated his chemistry professor for supporting Republican presidential candidate John C. Fremont. Finally, in 1861, he enlisted as an officer in the Sixth North Carolina Regiment, sent off by his father to fight for the cause of southern liberty.[16]

Young William took his name from his father's best friend, Senator William Campbell Preston of South Carolina. "If he shall be as full of talent, honor, & all the finer qualities of our nature as the gentleman whose name he bears," Mangum wrote of his newborn son in 1837, "he will be all that I desire."[17] Preston was deeply touched by the tribute. Looking back on their lives and long friendship more than twenty years later, he recalled how he had admired Mangum from their first meeting and came to love the North Carolinian as a brother. A falling out between Preston and John Calhoun ended Preston's political career in 1842. Still, the two Carolinians stayed in contact with one another and remained close friends for both their lives.[18]

Willie Mangum proved to be an attentive parent. A tough taskmaster, he pushed all his children to excel in academics. From an early age he insisted that they devote much

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[16] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 5:182-83, 327-28, 388-89.

[17] Willie Mangum to John Crittenden, 1837, miscellaneous item, University of Kentucky Libraries, Division of Special Collections and Archives, University of Kentucky, Lexington, Kentucky.

[18] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 2:508; 5:347; Ernest M. Lander, Jr., "The Calhoun-Preston Feud, 1836-1842," The South Carolina Historical Magazine 59 (1958):24, 37.

of their time to their studies. He frequently recommended reading material and sent books home. One package included a French dictionary, several French gammer books, and a copy of Homer's Iliad. Beyond the genteel arts expected of all elite young women in the South -- music, dancing, conversation, and deportment -- Mangum expected his daughters to master such "manly" subjects as botany, philosophy, chemistry, history, and "heathen mythology."[19] After receiving a sloppy letter from Sallie, Mangum warned that bad spelling and illegible handwriting "in a young lady . . . is as much observed as a sore on a pretty face."[20] Of all his children, Sallie seemed least capable of meeting her father's high standards. Martha, however, proved especially able, and so did her brother, who received high marks from all his instructors, including his dancing master. Beyond routine home instruction, Mangum insisted that his children attend local academies, to many of which he had given financial support or helped to found.[21]

Mangum's concern for his offspring extended well beyond their intellectual development. A doting father, he was unafraid to show affection and passionately devoted to their well-being. In nearly every letter that Mangum wrote to his wife after the birth

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[19] Quote from, Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 3:88. See also, ibid., 1:424; 2:1; 3:270; 4:257, 345, 403-404; 5:49; Greven, The Protestant Temperament, p. 290; Jane Turner Censer, North Carolina Planters and Their Children, 1800-1860 (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1984) p. 42.

[20] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 2:421.

[21] Ibid., 1:486, 506-507; 2:521, 468-69; 3:45, 364; 4:403-404; 5:90, 199, 285, 288, 377, 466-68, 479, 486; Ruth Blackwelder, The Age of Orange: Political and Intellectual Leadership in North Carolina, 1752-1861 (Charlotte: William Loftin, Publisher, 1961), p. 125.

of their first child, he included a request that she remember him to them and give each a kiss. He taught Sallie to master a horse and urged her to take walks to maintain her good health. When news that one had taken ill reached him in Washington, a worried Mangum would immediately write back to suggest remedies. Instructing his son in the sporting ways of the country squire became something of a game for Mangum, who gave William a toy gun so that he could learn to hunt and handed down to him an interest in ornithology. So too did he give his son a lesson in fashion. When ten-year-old William stayed with his father in Washington the two promenaded through the streets of the capital in matching attire. Sentimental, obliging, and thoughtful, Mangum adored his children, and they in turn expressed deep sentimental attachment for him.[22]

For a brief period in the late 1830s William Cain, Jr., Mangum's nephew, lived at Walnut Hall. The boy had had personal difficulties with his father who asked that Mangum try his hand at raising him. The manner in which Mangum handled his feckless charge says a great deal about his code of conduct. The younger Cain's sexual liaisons with slaves and free African-American prostitutes made his father furious. When the senior Cain left him at Walnut Hall, Mangum promised to do his best to reform the incorrigible youngster and channel William's energy into his studies. When the boy refused to obey, the senator sent a hasty note to his father, asking that he take his son back. Soon, however, Mangum reconsidered. In June 1839, six months after the episode

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[22] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 3:89, 365-66; 4:252, 347; 5:86, 88, 365, 368, 468; Greven, The Protestant Temperament, pp. 269-70; Censer, North Carolina Planters and Their Children, pp. xv-xvi, 39, 60-61; Wyatt-Brown, Southern Honor, p. 272.

began, Mangum believed William to be sufficiently redeemed and recommended him to David L. Swain, President of the University of North Carolina President. For Mangum, the key to moral rehabilitation was education. He would not tolerate indolence and profligacy at Walnut Hall and laid a firm hand on the boy to put a stop to such behavior. Once William had atoned for his youthful indiscretions, Mangum showed compassion. He forgave him and used his influence with Swain to help him get into college, something the boy's own father refused to do.[23]

For planters in the antebellum South, the notion of family extended beyond blood relations to include the slaves who lived and worked on the plantation. Mangum typified the paternalistic planter. He looked upon his human chattel as needy children, blessed with many virtues but burdened with serious vices. Mangum tended to the sick and mourned the dead and even named one slave for himself. Ironically, Willie the slave proved so "troublesome" that Mangum sold him, something he was reluctant to do. Instead, during hard times, Mangum hired out his slaves, always insisting that the lessee treat them humanely and often asking those slaves involved their opinions of likely employers. Still, Mangum harbored racist attitudes common to his generation. "My black family," he wrote late in life, "has been comparatively useless - the result no doubt of their profligacy & vices."[24] He regarded slave labor as "too careless" for complex

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[23] William Cain, Sr. to William Cain, Jr., 2 September and 3 October 1838, Willie P. Mangum Family Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.; Willie P. Mangum to David L. Swain, 15 June 1839, David Lowry Swain Papers, North Carolina Department of Archives and History, Raleigh, North Carolina.

[24] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 5:309.

manufacturing tasks and imagined theirs to be a happy, carefree life. Northern wage earners, he once said, toiled in dank factories amid crowded cities while slaves and masters worked side by side in the sunny fields of the south. By all accounts, Mangum sincerely believed this to be true.[25]

The size of Mangum's "black family" varied from one census to the next, births and deaths, and not sales having the greatest impact on population. From 1830 and 1860, the number of slaves residing on the Walnut Hall plantation fluctuated from twelve to twenty. Discrepancies between the amount listed by census takers and entries in the Mangum family bible suggest that either Willie or Charity or both withheld some names from the census recorders. Notations made in the inside cover of the family bible indicate that the Mangums owned more slaves than the government was led to believe. Whatever the exact number, Mangum's slaves clustered into three houses located well out of sight of the main dwelling. Uncle Anderson, Mangum's driver, lived in his own house. At least two servants, Orange and Polly, were permitted to live as a married couple and raise a large family of their own. Minerva, the cook, lived on the plantation with her daughter Lucy and her grandson June. Such evidence suggests a degree of stability in the slave community at Walnut Hall.[26]

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[25] Eugene D. Genovese, Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made (New York: Random House, 1972), pp. 1-7; Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 2:79-80; 3:262, 365; 4:17, 330-31; 5:169-70, 177, 234-35, 261-62, 284-85, 309, 557-58, 754.

[26] Federal Records, United States Bureau of the Census, Free Population, 1830-1860; Federal Records, United States Bureau of the Census, Slave Population, 1850-1860. Michael Hill, "Historical Report: The Mangum Family Cemetery, Durham County, North Carolina," North Carolina Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, North

Among the servants at Walnut Hall was a person referred to by family members as Miss Polly. A woman of European descent, Miss Polly lived with the Mangum family from the time of Willie's boyhood until after his death. Another servant, Louis Thompson, whose race is unknown, traveled with Mangum to Washington in the late 1840s and worked as his valet. Thompson and Mangum shared a cordial relationship indicative of the senator's egalitarian spirit. Mangum had social contact with free blacks. In 1843, Mangum helped Waller Freeman, a free African-American, purchase his family out of bondage. John Chavis, Mangum's former tutor and a person of color, visited Walnut Hall from time to time to talk with Mangum about politics. Pattie Mangum once chanced upon a group of curious slaves peering through the parlor window to see what Chavis and Mangum were doing. When she came within earshot, one slave asked her, "what is that nigger doing in the parlor talking to Judge Mangum?"[27] Her father apparently did not share their belief that the educator was out of place and invited him back often. Mangum consulted Chavis about his children's education and, in the late 1830s, asked him to act as their live-in tutor.[28]

The Judge got along well with his neighbors on Red Mountain. He enjoyed a full slate of social affairs with the local gentry during his stays at Walnut Hall and entertained

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Carolina; Mangum Family Bible, Willie Person Mangum Papers, Special Collections, Duke University Library, Durham, North Carolina; Mangum Family Bible, Willie P. Mangum Family Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.; Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 5:755.

[27] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 5:753.

[28] Ibid., 2:104; 3:435-36; 4:37; 5:6, 104, 330, 753, 760.

regularly. With his poorer neighbors he exhibited the noblesse oblige expected of a man of his high rank. He lent slaves to those in need of an extra hand and once sold land to a family of sharecroppers for a token sum, an act of generosity he could ill afford. His tastes in stylish clothing and fine wines had added to his longstanding financial embarrassment. Like most members of the southern ruling class, Mangum lived well beyond his means. Even after settling with his creditors in the late 1820s and early 1830s, he continued to run up debts and always seemed to be scrambling for cash. Friends and relatives lent him small sums, but his larger obligations demanded extreme measures. By 1850, Mangum was so cash poor that he contemplated selling his most valued slave and, following the advice of his brother Priestly, put one of his prized thoroughbreds on the block. Thanks to the able management of Priestly, Charity, his daughters Martha and Mary, and himself, Mangum did not have to parcel off his plantation.[29]

Walnut Hall plantation covered approximately 1,600 acres of land. Only half the acreage was cultivated. Set on middling quality soil, Mangum's farm produced an abundance of staple crops and more than enough food to sustain its residents. Tobacco, corn, oat, and wheat fields, common sights in Orange County, made up the patchwork landscape. Factors regularly carted these cash crops to the marketplace in Petersburg,

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[29] Ibid., 2:339; 3:29-30; 4:312, 432-33; 5:174, 177, 754; Willie P. Mangum, Expense Account, 21 December 1841 to 31 August 1842, Willie Person Mangum Papers, Special Collections, Duke University Library, Durham, North Carolina; Gales & Seaton, General Ledger no. 2, 1825-1854, Joseph Gales Papers, Special Collections, Duke University Library, Durham, North Carolina; Willie P. Mangum to Francis Asbury Dickens, October 1849, Francis Asbury Dickens Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

Virginia, their wagons also laded with beef, pork and wool. Hogs, sheep, and cattle, grazed on the unimproved acreage awaiting slaughter, shearing, or milking. Horses shared the pastures. Mangum prided himself on being a good farmer and provided his family with a varied and nutritious diet. Pumpkins, carrots, sweet potatoes, eggplants, beets, melons, all thrived in the vegetable gardens around Walnut Hall. Mangum, his family, and his slaves regularly feasted on a diet of bacon, beef, salt pork, and mutton. Hunger and privation appear to have been unknown to the residents of Walnut Hall.[30]

Fruit and ornamental trees beautified the grounds around the main house. An apple orchard west of the four and three-quarter acre fence-enclosed lawn and two pear trees provided fruit and shade. Rose bushes and a rose arbor sat between a large smoke house and the carriage barn. A row of English boxwoods lined the walkway leading to the main house and several tall cedars stood across the road passing in front of the plantation. A curved driveway formed a semicircle in front of the main house. With two gated entrances, one to the east and the other to the west of the house, it provided access to the road connecting Oxford and Hillsborough. Several buildings, including a kitchen, an ice house, an office, and a barn, along with the other aforementioned structures, served the

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[30] Federal Records, United States Bureau of the Census, Agricultural Schedule, 1850 and 1860; Robert C. Kenzer, Kinship and Neighborhood in a Southern Community: Orange County, North Carolina, 1849-1881 (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1987), pp. 35-37; Hillsborough Recorder, 6 February 1856; Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 3:483; 4:232, 313, 451; 5:49, 113, 309, 311, 336-37; Charity A. Mangum to Willie P. Mangum, 9 February 1844, Willie P. Mangum Family Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.; United States Congress, The Congressional Globe, 31st Cong., 1st sess., p. 567; Martha Person Mangum, Diary, 22 October 1859, Willie P. Mangum Family Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

residents of the plantation. Two towering walnut trees standing just to the rear of the main house gave the plantation its name.[31]

The centerpiece of the Mangum plantation was the two-story, Greek revival manor, Walnut Hall. Fashioned after the palatial home of Duncan Cameron, Mangum's patron and one of the wealthiest men in North Carolina, the house was constructed in two phases. The rear ell was built around the year 1800 and housed the family until 1845, when a second, more commodious wing was completed. A small overhang supported by four white columns protected the front door of the finished house. An ornately crafted double doorway led visitors into a main hall that passed directly to the rear of the house. A large back porch looked on the two walnut trees and, in the distance, the rose garden. Tall chimneys rose on either side of the two-story front ell while a third cut through the center of the single-story rear ell. Flanking the front hall to the east and west were two spacious parlors, each warmed by its own fireplace. A staircase in the hall led up to family sleeping quarters on the second story. The rear wall of the east parlor opened to a wide passageway with exterior doors to the left and right and a door along the rear wall leading into the well-appointed dining room. A long banquet table and ample sideboard allowed Mangum to host modest dinner parties. Indeed, elegant furniture, much of it made from mahogany, curios, and fine brass work graced every room. Paintings hung throughout the house and outer office. In the back, beyond the dining area, was an interior kitchen where

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[31] See diagram of estate drawn by Elizabeth T. Spencer in, Willie Person Mangum Papers, North Carolina Department of Archives and History, Raleigh, North Carolina.

servants made final preparations on meals cooked in another kitchen located a few yards behind the main house.[32]

Walnut Hall, like estates throughout the old South, served as testament to the conspicuous consumption of the ruling class. Mangum's clothing, his comportment, and his stately bearing all marked him as a true southern aristocrat. Like most members of his class, Mangum enjoyed the leisurely pace of plantation life. He took pleasure in his books, his horses, and most of all, in his family. Unfortunately, Mangum also participated in the southern tradition of amassing debts he found hard to pay. For all his financial problems, the Judge seemed at peace whenever he returned to Walnut Hall. A sanctuary, his home surely was a port in the storm of public life. Still, he could not stay away from politics for long. His temperament would not allow it; nor would his friends. Crittenden's beckoning to roam old battlefields and retell old stories touched a nerve with Mangum. The war had not ended. It would not end until Mangum was vindicated.

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[32] A rough sketch of the floor plan of Walnut Hall can be found in, Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 3:448-49. Two photographs of the house, which burned to the ground in the early 1830s, are in, ibid., 3:400-401. Other photographs of Mangum's furniture, portraits, and other smaller items can be found in all five volumes of the published Mangum papers.

CHAPTER 9
VINDICATION

Willie Mangum found peace at Walnut Hall but still felt the sting of an involuntary return. Almost from the day he resigned his seat in the senate his friends had been working to send him back to Washington. They plotted to elect him to lesser offices or sought appointive posts, but nothing of consequence developed. Mangum might not have accepted an inferior position if given the opportunity. Besides, his sense of honor demanded that he be vindicated by triumphant reelection at the hands of the same body that had turned him out. If this could be done while humiliating his enemies, all the better. Reinstating Mangum to the United States Senate meant that one of the two current senators, both Democrats, had to be displaced. That suited the Whigs, even those who thought little of Mangum and his desire for revenge.

Throughout 1837, Mangum received entreaties from some of his party's leading figures prodding him to return to office. With a congressional election approaching, Duff Green and John Calhoun of South Carolina, and John Crittenden of Kentucky began pressing their old friend to run. "The House is the field of action," Calhoun wrote Mangum in February 1837, "and we greatly lack experienced and able men there. You

must offer from your district. Let nothing dissuade you."[1] Duff Green also tried to coax Mangum. On March 6, 1837, combining flattery and appeals to his regional pride, he urged Mangum to enter the contest. "You owe it to your country to come forward," Green begged, "[with] you in the House & Calhoun in the Senate the South may yet be saved."[2] During the summer Green again contacted Mangum, this time raising the possibility that, if victorious, he could be elected Speaker of the House.[3]

Charles P. Green, William A. Graham, Charles L. Hinton, and some of Mangum's other allies in North Carolina made similar appeals, but without invoking the grand promises of their South Carolinian ally. Privately, Hinton and Weston R. Gales, both of whom were publicly committed to the former senator, wondered if he had made too many enemies during the instructions episode to win the open seat.[4] For reasons known only to himself, Mangum would not run. In June 1837, the Orange County Whigs, unaware that Mangum had decided to refuse the nomination, met in Hillsborough to name him their candidate. One week later, Mangum announced, through local newspaper editor Dennis

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[1] Henry Thomas Shanks, ed., The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 5 vols. (Raleigh: State Department of Archives and History, 1950-1956), 2:492.

[2] Ibid., 2:493.

[3] Ibid., 2:505.

[4] Ibid., 2:493; J. G. de Roulhac Hamilton and Henry M. Wagstaff, eds., The Papers of William Alexander Graham, 8 vols. (Raleigh: State Department of Archives and History, 1957-1992), 1:497, 501-502.

Heartt, that he was honored by the tribute, but had to decline it. Nothing, Heartt wrote, could be said or done to make him change his mind.[5]

When word of Mangum's decision reached Washington, his old friends wrote to express their displeasure. "You must not be idle," John Crittenden advised Mangum, adding that he was in a good position to take charge of the North Carolina delegation in the lower house.[6] William Preston was more caustic. "You have no right to bury in obscurity the high endowments with which God has blessed you," adding sarcastically that he should certainly be doing more than growing "corn & potatoes."[7] Such flattering failed to produce the desired effect. Mangum was enjoying the peace and seclusion of Walnut Hall and the revival of his law practice. As for politics, he had only unpleasant memories of life in Washington,he claimed, and, as John Crittenden put it, would forget "all such profane things as politics & politicians."[8] Accepting a job as County Road Overseer, which he assumed in August 1837, seemed an easy way to fulfill his civic duty closer to home. Crittenden probably knew that his friend's contentment would be short lived. For all his complaining, Mangum thrived in the arena of national politics. With a hostile administration in the White House and plenty of issues to excite and inflame him, Mangum soon began behaving like his old self.[9]

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[5] Hillsborough Recorder, 23, 30 June 1837.

[6] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 2:512.

[7] Ibid., 2:510.

[8] Ibid., 2:511.

[9] Ibid., 2:506.

Among the first concerns confronting the nation was a sagging economy. Early in 1837, a sudden drop in stock and commodity prices triggered a depression. The resulting uncertainty as well as the remedies proposed by the two major political parties cemented alliances that had been taking form since the early part of the decade. Whigs blamed their opponents, particularly Presidents Andrew Jackson and Martin Van Buren, for precipitating the crisis. As the party in power, the Democrats had difficulty deflecting such criticism as Whigs made political capital out of voter discontent. After the panic of 1837, the two parties had finished the process of self definition. Democrats painted themselves as advocates of a negative liberal state, proponents of minimalist government. Whigs championed the opposite; an activist agenda that included the bank, a protective tariff, and internal improvement projects. Their ideal was a positive liberal state.[10]

To restore prosperity and public confidence, Martin Van Buren proposed establishing federal depositories independent of state banks to hold federal revenue. The subtreasury, as it was commonly known, divorced the federal government from the

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[10] John Ashworth, "Agrarians" and "Aristocrats": Party Political Ideology in the United States, 1837-1846 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983), pp. 81-82; Thomas Jeffrey, State Parties and National Politics: North Carolina, 1814-1861 (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1989), p.83; Burton W. Folsom, II, "Party Formation & Development in Jacksonian America: The Old South," Journal of American Studies 7 (1973):222, 228-29; William R. Brock, Parties & Political Conscience: American Dilemmas, 1840-1850 (Millwood, N.Y.: KTO Press, 1979), p. 13; Marc W. Kruman, Parties and Politics in North Carolina, 1836-1865 (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1983), pp. 21, 61, 63; Harry L. Watson, Jacksonian Politics and Community Conflict: The Emergence of the Second Party System in Cumberland County North Carolina (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1981), p. 299; Richard L. McCormick, The Party Period and Public Policy: American Politics from the Age of Jackson to the Progressive Era (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), p. 165.

national banking system and represented an important step in the direction of a negative liberal state. From September 5, 1837, the day Van Buren made public his plan, until July 4, 1840, the day he signed it into law, the Subtreasury Bill consumed Washington. In North Carolina and throughout the nation it grabbed the attention of public officials and ordinary citizens alike. In the South, states righters divided over the measure, something Van Buren had hoped for from the beginning. Fiscal conservatism led many of them into the arms of the administration. For Willie Mangum and many others like him, however, party loyalty proved far stronger than flexible economic principles.[11]

North Carolina Whigs attacked the subtreasury with familiar accusations of presidential tyranny. With the executive branch controlling its own depository, they argued, the likelihood of corruption increased. John Calhoun's proviso requiring banks to pay all federal debts in specie, which he tacked to the bill in October 1837, only added to their anguish. They argued that it would undermine the economy by deflating bank notes and forcing a contraction of credit, hurting small landowners and others in need of inexpensive loans.[12] On October 4, 1837, the senate agreed to recommend the bill to the house. Six days later Mangum wrote Duff Green denouncing the subtreasury as

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[11] David J. Russo, "The Major Political Issues of the Jacksonian Period and the Development of Party Loyalty in Congress, 1830-1840," Transactions of the American Philosophical Society 62 (1972):37, 40, 46; Arthur C. Cole, The Whig Party in the South (Washington, D.C.: American Historical Association, 1913), pp. 45, 50-51.

[12] Jeffrey, State Parties and National Politics, p. 84; William J. Cooper, Jr., The South and the Politics of Slavery, 1828-1856 (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1978), p. 101.

"impracticable & deeply mischievous."[13] He vowed to another that neither he nor his infant son would ever support the subtreasury scheme.[14]

In his letter to Green, Mangum captured the true meaning of the subtreasury debate. "I feel that friends have to part," he wrote.[15] Old alliances, he told Green, had become obsolete and an important transition was now underway. In North Carolina, the supporters of John Calhoun, who had sided with the administration on the Subtreasury Bill, abandoned the Whigs and went over to the Democrats. Instead of destroying the party, the fissure left the Whigs stronger. Calhoun's defection meant the departure of the more extreme states rights elements of the party. His rejection of Whig orthodoxy rendered him unacceptable to centrist stalwarts like Mangum, who saw Calhoun's move as inspired by equal parts of opportunism and idealism. Senator William Preston of South Carolina thought it was Calhoun's ambition that led him to drift from his Whiggish moorings. Preston informed Mangum that Calhoun believed the Democrats to be "without a head" under Van Buren and that he, Calhoun, "could mount upon the vacant shoulders" of the Democratic party.[16] Mangum agreed, blasting Calhoun for claiming to be the final arbiter of "the states right creed." He wrote that Calhoun had split the south to the benefit

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[13] Willie P. Mangum to Duff Green, 10 October 1837, The Duff Green Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

[14] Willie Mangum to John Crittenden, 1837, miscellaneous item, University of Kentucky Libraries, Division of Special Collections and Archives, University of Kentucky, Lexington, Kentucky.

[15] Willie P. Mangum to Duff Green, 10 October 1837, The Duff Green Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

[16] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 2:509.

of Van Buren.[17] He miscalculated. The Whigs in North Carolina had been cleansed of their most divisive elements. From then on, they would speak with one voice on nearly all of the major policy questions of the day.[18]

Free of Calhoun's influence, states rights Whigs reappointed Henry Clay their national leader. Having toned down his political and economic nationalism, Clay satisfied southern Whigs who had, until recently, regarded him with him deep hostility and suspicion. The new states rights version of Clay, a defender of slavery, a low tariff, and distribution, was the anointed hero of Mangum and the North Carolina Whigs. As early as October 1837, Mangum's associates across the south were inducing him to openly back Clay for the presidency. William Preston, for one, quietly drummed up support for Clay in Calhoun's backyard. In November, Hamilton Jones, editor of the Salisbury-based Carolina Watchman, contacted Mangum to coordinate strategies for the 1840 election. He also urged Mangum to make public his privately held view that, of the Whigs, Clay stood the best chance of toppling Van Buren.[19]

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[17] Willie P. Mangum to Duff Green, 10 October 1837, The Duff Green Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

[18] Russo, "The Major Political Issues of the Jacksonian Period," pp. 18, 42; Ashworth, "Agrarians" and "Aristocrats", p. 231.

[19] Cooper, The South and the Politics of Slavery, pp. 121-24; Ashworth, "Agrarians" and "Aristocrats", p. 255; Cole, The Whig Party in the South, pp. 53-54; Ernest M. Lander, Jr., "The Calhoun-Preston Feud, 1836-1842," The South Carolina Historical Magazine 59 (1958):29, 32-33; Herbert Dale Pegg, The Whig Party in North Carolina (Chapel Hill: Colonial Press, 1968), p. 97; Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 2:510, 513.

Clay and Mangum had been friends for many years, but their politics often kept them at odds. By 1837, their differences had passed, and the two corresponded as friends and allies. Clay saw Mangum's downfall in 1836 as compromising his own effectiveness in the senate and hoped he would mount a comeback without delay. Early in 1837, he asked Francis T. Brooke, "what good can I do, what mischief avert, by remaining" now that Mangum and a few of his other confederates were no longer there to help him.[20] The Kentuckian surely underestimated his own abilities. With Calhoun out of the running and the Democrats trying to put the best face on a troubled economy, Clay and the Whigs were in a good position to win the next election. Clay knew this and counted upon state leaders like Mangum to press their advantage. Accordingly, Mangum worked tirelessly to coordinate Whig organizations within his state and beyond its borders.

On February 19, 1838, Henry Clay denounced the subtreasury in a four and one-half hour speech to the senate.[21] Biting references to Andrew Jackson and Martin Van Buren pleased Mangum, who appreciated "its practical & useful tone." He found Clay's allusions to Calhoun, however, "a little too spicy." "You ought to remember," Mangum wrote Clay on March 26, 1838, "that the truth often hurts more than the worst calumny." In his letter, Mangum outlined his plans for the upcoming presidential election. Once pessimistic about his party's chances, he now believed that "the administration may pretty

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[20] James F. Hopkins, Mary W. M. Hargreaves, Robert Seager, II, and Melba Porter Hay, eds., The Papers of Henry Clay, 9 vols. (Lexington: The University of Kentucky Press, 1959-1988), 9:26-27.

[21] Robert V. Remini, Henry Clay: Statesman for the Union (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1991), pp. 512-13.

certainly be displaced & [thought he could] throw the vote of this state against Mr. Van Buren." He based his opinion on "an extensive correspondence with our friends in this state" and concluded that "as fine or a finer spirit pervades the ranks of the Whigs than ever I knew." Mangum claimed that this enthusiasm reached beyond party officials and newspaper editors to "the bone & sinew of our population -- the substantial country gentlemen & farmers [and] . . . that portion of our population that think & read."[22]

Mangum went on to warn Clay that he needed to be careful not to appear too partisan. The best way to do this, he advised, was to downplay the nominating convention, which was very unpopular in North Carolina. Mangum appreciated the irony that he was partly responsible, through his antiparty rhetoric, for having rendered "that mode of nomination" unacceptable to a large portion of his constituency. Still, he knew that the Whigs had to launch a coordinated attack against the administration and a unified convention was a good first step toward that end. Mangum promised that, if needed, his state would send a pro-Clay delegation to the convention. He also guaranteed the backing of the local Whig press. Both assurances were fulfilled, showing that even outside the formal corridors of power Mangum wielded considerable influence with upper echelon Whigs. His pull with voters proved a different matter entirely.[23]

After spending a good part of 1837 turning down offers to run for office, Mangum decided early in 1838 that the time was right. In March he notified Clay that he was

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[22] Willie P. Mangum to Henry Clay, 26 March 1838, Clay Mss., Manuscripts Department, Lilly Library, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana.

[23] Ibid.

seeking a seat in the North Carolina House of Commons. He believed his chances were good, that the Whigs in Orange County could capture all four of the available seats. Why he believed this to be a propitious time, why he chose to seek local, rather than national office, is unclear.[24] James Graham, for one, was at a loss to explain Mangum's motives and guessed that he would lose. "Mangum ought to go out freely, I presume his acquaintance among the people is nearly worn out," Graham wrote his brother William in April.[25] Mangum's silence since leaving the senate cost him at least one vote, perhaps many more. James Augustus mistakenly thought the candidate supported the Subtreasury Bill, doubtless the result of Mangum's failure to define clearly his position.[26] None of the letters in his voluminous collection make mention of this campaign. Whether this means the pertinent documents have been lost or he never wrote any remains unknown. If he neglected his correspondence during the spring and summer of 1838, as some of his friends maintained, then he made a critical lapse of judgment in what until then had been a well-managed political career.[27]

In an incredibly close election, Willie Mangum lost his bid for a seat in the House of Commons. With four vacancies, only the top four vote-getters earned spots in the lower chamber. Mangum finished fifth, just six votes shy of fourth place. The voters of Orange elected three Democrats and one Whig instead. Gracious in defeat, Mangum

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[24] Hopkins, et al, The Papers of Henry Clay, 9:166-67.

[25] Hamilton and Wagstaff, The Papers of William Alexander Graham, 2:7.

[26] Ibid., 2:12.

[27] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 2:511.

refused to call for a recount, even after investigators had turned up discrepancies in the official tally. The local Whig press was less magnanimous. Mangum, they insisted, had been "legally elected," only to be denied his rightful place in the assembly by "a misapprehension of the law" governing voter registration in Chapel Hill and a questionable count. Twisting a knife in an old wound, the Democratic press announced scornfully that "Willie Mangum has been instructed by his constituents to stay home."[28]

Mangum's misfortune was not shared by his party. The off-year election of 1838 proved a watershed for North Carolina Whiggery. Voters reelected Whig Governor Edward B. Dudley by a resounding 64 percent of the popular vote and placed solid Whig majorities in both chambers of the legislature. With their superior organization and their adversaries in disarray, a Whig triumph was all but certain. Running a seamless campaign, they stressed their opposition to the Independent Treasury and blamed administration policies for the recent panic. Conversely, the Democrats were listless, following one miscue with another. Their greatest blunder was the nomination of John Branch, one of the original anti-Van Buren men in North Carolina, as their gubernatorial candidate. Made by a party meeting in Raleigh held one month before the August election, the selection of Branch left local Democrats bickering among themselves while the Whigs coasted to victory. In the end, the Whigs controlled both houses of the General

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[28] All quotes, Raleigh Register, 10 September 1838; See also, ibid., 9, 27 August 1838.

Assembly and the governorship, the first time in North Carolina history one party so dominated state politics.[29]

Exclusion from Commons did not prevent Mangum from exacting his revenge on the Democrats; instead, the seasoned leader imposed his will on a pliant legislature. In December 1838, as lawmakers descended on Raleigh to start the session, Mangum and Kenneth Rayner of Hertford met at a rooming house in the capital. For two weeks they worked on resolutions that would bear the name of the Commoner. Officials in Raleigh knew that equal credit was due Mangum. The document amounted to a statement of the Whig agenda and a denunciation of Democratic programs. It further requested the state's two Senators, Robert Strange and Bedford Brown, both Democrats, to "represent the will of the majority of the people of this state by carrying out the foregoing resolutions." When Strange and Brown demanded to know if these were formal instructions, Whigs responded opaquely, careful not to use that word. Having been stung once by the doctrine, they now played semantical games to cover blatant inconsistencies. In truth, the Whigs were settling an old score with their rivals -- these were instructions, this was a vendetta.[30]

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[29] Jeffrey, State Parties and National Politics, pp. 81; Richard P. McCormick, The Second American Party System: Party Formation in the Jacksonian Era (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1966), p. 207; Cole, The Whig Party in the South, pp. 52.

[30] Pegg, The Whig Party in North Carolina, pp. 64, 105-107; William S. Hoffman, "Willie P. Mangum and the Whig Revival of the Doctrine of Instructions," The Journal of Southern History 22 (1956):354; Hillsborough Recorder, 13 December 1838.

On December 9, 1838, Mangum revealed to Thomas Bennehan the true nature of his mission to Raleigh. "My object was to beat up the quarters of our derelict Senators," he wrote brashly. The former senator did not hide his intentions, nor did he gloss over the ultimate goal of the resolutions. "I hope, I believe, the senators will be driven out." "As to their successors," Mangum continued, "it would be contemptible affectation to say that I do not desire a certificate from the state, after suffering what I have." No longer willing to play the martyr, Mangum had taken it upon himself to destroy the Democrats. Once he had driven them from office, Mangum boasted, he would return to the Senate. Indirect attacks and veiled partisanship had shown mixed results. By December 1838, he had abandoned such pretensions, vindictively predicting passage for his and Rayner's handiwork.[31] Following a month-long debate, the resolutions passed unamended. Voting in both chambers closely conformed to party lines.[32]

Without explicit instructions, Brown and Strange could, and did, disregard the resolutions. Unmoved by their defiance, Whigs refused to let up on the Democrats. With a numerical advantage in the General Assembly, they looked ahead to a fruitful session. They also planned to push their agenda outside the state house. On December 10, 1838, two hundred delegates from forty counties met in Raleigh to attend an internal improvements convention. Again, the Democrats stymied the Whig's chances to make political capital on what was clearly a Whig issue. They won top posts at the conference

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[31] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 2:534-35.

[32] Pegg, The Whig Party in North Carolina, p. 64.

and co-sponsored the most generous proposition to come out of the proceedings. Mangum's decision not to attend the conference probably hurt his party. Had he used his influence and newly-realized Machiavellianism to prevent Democrats from capturing leadership positions, the Whigs may have been able to take more credit for the popular meeting. Ultimately, Whigs regarded the outcome with mixed emotions. As champions of state-funded internal improvements, they favored recommendations like railroad construction, turnpike McAdamization, and the dredging of rivers and harbors. However, they had to share the glory with their rivals.[33]

Mangum's collaborative effort with Kenneth Rayner was uncharacteristically heavy-handed. Typically, he acted more subtly and with greater finesse. Writing letters, bending ears at dinner parties, or having cocktails with friends proved better suited to his personality. After 1838 he resumed these old habits to advance Henry Clay's presidential candidacy. Regular updates from Washington told him that Martin Van Buren looked vulnerable. More good news came from Raleigh when Rayner reported that their scheme to unseat Brown and Strange was going as planned and that many Whigs looked to Mangum as a likely replacement in the event of a resignation. Rayner added that Mangum needed to return to Raleigh and put pressure on Whigs who were still uneasy about running Clay in North Carolina. All indications are that Mangum stayed at Walnut Hall. Concern for his family and law practice superseded all else. An outbreak of scarlet fever late in

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[33] Raleigh Register, 31 December 1838; Jeffrey, State Parties and National Politics, p. 124; Pegg, The Whig Party in North Carolina, pp. 54, 65; Watson, Jacksonian Politics and Community Conflict, pp. 243, 247.

1839 nearly claimed the life of his wife Charity. Lesser aches and pains, including a broken ankle, kept Mangum in bed for several weeks. Sitting upright against his headboard, his foot resting on a pillow, Mangum wrote letters to national leaders to advise about politics and complain about discomfort. He devoted himself to local causes as well. Raising money so Dennis Heartt could modernize his operations in Hillsborough was one way Mangum could thank his "little Irishman" for more than a decade of loyal service, while simultaneously building a more efficient Whig press.[34]

By the middle of 1839 Mangum was again playing "the presidential game." The quadrennial ritual consumed him as never before, in part because, for the first time, he felt victory in his grasp and knew he had the power and influence to make it happen. Also, for the first time, influential Whigs from across the country were talking about putting his name on a national ticket. As always, Mangum began the game early and in earnest. Corresponding with power brokers and their underlings, newspaper editors and their readers, he drummed up support for Henry Clay in all quarters. Like-minded men answered his letters with requests for personal appearances. Before the election was over, Mangum would receive solicitations from as close as Raleigh and as far away as Montgomery, Alabama. Whigs from modest cities like Richmond and tiny hamlets like Clarksville, Tennessee tried to enlist the aid of the skilled and famous orator.[35]

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[34] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 2:534, 536-37; 3:1, 2, 4-5, 15, 18, 24.

[35] Ibid., 3:31-36, 38, 40-44, 50-56, 59, 66-69.

As the Whigs prepared for their convention in Raleigh, state party leaders looked to Mangum for advice. On October 11, 1839, William A. Graham urged him to assume a leading role at the meeting slated to take place the following month. "You will be expected to appear at the head of the committee who shall digest the course of proceedings to be adopted," Graham wrote. The convention, he added, would appoint two delegates to the national convention to be held in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania that December. "Would it suit you to be one of these?" he asked. Acknowledging Mangum's popularity, Graham believed Mangum would lend integrity and name recognition to the proceedings. He also thought Mangum would bring cunning. Reminding him of his recent collaboration with Rayner, Graham asked that he condense their resolutions into pamphlet form and broadcast them throughout the state. "It would afford essential aid in keeping the minds of the people intent on the abuses of the administration," Graham wrote, fully aware that they were as much political manifestoes as legislative acts.[36]

Despite such pleas, Mangum stayed home. Even without their best-known figure in attendance, the first ever North Carolina Whig convention went smoothly. After the delegates elected John Owen chairman they nominated John Morehead for governor. They chose Owen and James Mebane to represent them in Harrisburg and, as expected, endorsed Henry Clay for the presidency. By now, the Whig machine operated with smooth efficiency. With the state convention the Whigs had shed their antipartisan skin. The mass meetings, barbecues, militia musters, public dinners arranged by the party that year

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[36] Ibid., 3:19.

represented the culmination of a process that began early that decade. By 1839 and 1840, the Whigs had come of age, thanks to the efforts of Willie Mangum, his friends, and his enemies.[37]

Having set aside their traditional aversion to conventions, James Mebane, John Owen, and ten other North Carolina Whigs set out for Harrisburg. On December 4, 1839, they joined delegates from twenty-two other states at a Lutheran Church to begin the first national Whig convention. The harmony witnessed in Raleigh could not be found there. Three men, each backed by local king makers and state conventions, had dreams of capturing the presidential nomination. Henry Clay appeared to be the early favorite, having received endorsements from several state conventions in the south and southwest. Still, powerful forces blocked his path. Thurlow Weed, a New York editor and self-proclaimed "new-style Whig," thought little of the Kentuckian's chances. He believed the party needed a fresh face, someone without a past that could be used against them. General Winfield Scott, Weed thought, was such a man. Another former military figure with strong support in Harrisburg was William Henry Harrison of Ohio, an aging general whose legendary battlefield triumphs were a distant memory. Like Scott he was not weighted down by potentially damaging political baggage. With the three candidates in

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[37] Raleigh Register, 16 November 1839; Jeffrey, State Parties and National Politics, pp. 91, 95; Pegg, The Whig Party in North Carolina, pp. 38-39, 48, 116-117; McCormick, The Second American Party System, p. 208.

the blocks, delegates settled in for the battle to decide who would be their standard-bearer.[38]

The likelihood of a Clay nomination waned as the convention progressed. Informal canvasses showed him to have solid support among southern delegates, but only lukewarm support with everyone else. With Tennessee and Georgia unrepresented and the Arkansas contingent still en route, Clay supporters could only wait to see what Weed, Thaddeus Stevens, Harrison's principal backer, and the other anti-Clay managers had in store. When a Harrison delegate convinced the body to adopt a procedural rule favorable to his candidate, Clay's fate was sealed. Weed then threw his weight behind the Ohioan. After the back room maneuvering and unofficial canvassing was completed, the delegates cast the only official ballot of the convention giving Harrison 148 votes and the nomination. Clay finished a distant second with 90 votes and Scott took the remaining 16. In a show of solidarity, the delegates declared Harrison their unanimous choice.[39] The North Carolina delegation, ever loyal to Clay, went home, according to the Raleigh Register, "disappointed, if not dissatisfied."[40]

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[38] Pegg, The Whig Party in North Carolina, p. 97; William Nisbet Chambers, "Election of 1840," in Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., Fred L. Israel, and William P. Hansen, eds., History of American Presidential Elections: 1789-1968, 4 vols. (New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1971), 1:644, 657-58, 660-61, 663, 688.

[39] Chambers, "Election of 1840," pp. 659-65, 672-73; Michael F. Holt, Political Parties and American Development from the Age of Jackson to the Age of Lincoln (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1992), pp. 16-17; Jeffrey, State Parties and National Politics, p. 96.

[40] Raleigh Register, 14 December 1839.

Before breaking up, the convention needed to name a vice presidential candidate. Hoping to balance the ticket with a Clay man, the Harrison Whigs turned to the Kentuckian for suggestions. Feeling betrayed by his party and unimpressed with Harrison, Clay refused to help. Left with no alternative, representatives from the two camps met secretly to consider the possibilities. They first approached John Crittenden of Kentucky, but he declined out of loyalty to Clay. Benjamin Watkins Leigh of Virginia turned down the next proffer for the same reason. After taking himself out of the running, Leigh suggested Willie Mangum. He too felt obliged to Clay and instructed his agents in Harrisburg to reject the offer.[41] Later, Mangum said that had he been there in person he might have accepted. His wife's bout with scarlet fever had kept him home. Rather than blame her for this lost opportunity, he joked that it was an outdated wardrobe that prevented him from going to Harrisburg. "If I had had a new suit," he quipped after the eventual nominee John Tyler had ascended to the first office, "Mr Tyler perhaps had not been President."[42] After considering several others, including Daniel Webster, William

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[41] George Rawlings Poage, Henry Clay and the Whig Party (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1936), p. 13; Daniel Walker Howe, The Political Culture of the American Whigs (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1979), p. 141: Niles National Register, 11 December 1841; The American Review: A Whig Journal of Politics, Literature, Art, and Science, April 1845; Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 3:136, 243; Chambers, "Election of 1840," p. 664; Robert Gray Gunderson, The Log Cabin Campaign (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1957), p. 62.

[42] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 4:75.

C. Preston, and two members of the North Carolina delegation, the committee chose Tyler. He accepted and the ticket was complete.[43]

In April 1840, the field of candidates increased by one when the abolitionist Liberty Party named James G. Birney their presidential candidate. The next month, Democrats renominated president Martin Van Buren. Both the incumbent and Birney ran on platforms. In a race where empty slogans and nonsensical jingles constituted political dialogue, platforms were unwise. The Whigs knew this and adapted well to the new style. Offering no true platform, they ran instead on Harrison's military record and questionable standing as a common man of the people. Laying to rest their disappointment over not getting Clay, North Carolina Whigs soon warmed to the man packaged as the hard-cider-drinking hero of Tippecanoe. Birney had no such appeal. With very little support outside New England, his name did not appear on ballots in several states, including North Carolina. Democrats, split by factionalism and saddled with an unpopular candidate, conducted a dispirited campaign in the Tar Heel State.[44]

On May 26, 1840, Orange County's "Republican Whigs" met at the Masonic Hall in Hillsborough to nominate candidates for local races to be held in August. Delegates arrived in high spirits, sensing victory and with it a chance to vindicate a favorite son. With the latter in mind, they unanimously picked Willie Mangum to be their candidate for the state senate. Dennis Heartt reported that the nominee, who did not attend the meeting,

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[43] Robert Seager, II, and Tyler too: A Biography of John & Julia Gardiner Tyler (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1963), pp. 134-35.

[44] Chambers, "Election of 1840," pp. 644-45, 666-67, 669-71, 678-79.

was willing to "submit to the people of Orange."[45] Mangum ran an aggressive campaign from the onset. Long days on the trail were followed by evening visits with neighbors where Mangum held court. General Joseph Allison, the Democratic nominee, matched the marathon pace set by his rival. Seasoned observers of local politics were impressed by their combined energy. William A. Graham remarked at the end of the two-month-long odyssey that Mangum had "kept in the field constantly untill [sic] the day of the election."[46] In August the people went to the polls and elected Mangum by an 80 vote majority. Solid majorities in both Hillsborough and Chapel Hill helped Mangum edge out Allison 783 to 703.[47]

With his own fate secure, Mangum set off to campaign for Harrison. Throughout September and October the well-respected orator spoke with voters and tangled with Democrats at informal debates. Enthusiastic crowds greeted the Judge as a conquering hero at almost every stop. In Granville he listened as thousands of supporters chanted his name. When it came his time to speak, he lashed out at the Democrats with a two-hour-long indictment of their policies. Sympathetic onlookers described it as "glorious" and "eloquent."[48] Similar exchanges took place in Hillsborough, Caswell County, and Franklin County. In Chapel Hill, the local Tippecanoe Club paraded about town pulling

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[45] Hillsborough Recorder, 28 May 1840.

[46] Hamilton and Wagstaff, The Papers of William Alexander Graham, 2:110; Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 3:44.

[47] Hillsborough Recorder, 30 July, 15 August 1840;

[48] Raleigh Register, 18 September 1840.

a "Log Cabin" float and waving a banner bearing Mangum's name. The presidential election campaign of 1840 in Orange County, as in other parts of the country, was the most colorful to date.[49]

The enthusiasm generated by several months of scenes like those witnessed in Orange County brought voters to the polls in record numbers. Approximately 80 percent of eligible voters cast ballots nationwide. Politicians like Mangum deserve much of the credit for rallying the faithful. Grass-roots organizations in every part of the country introduced the public to a new style of politics, one in which substantive questions took a backseat to hoopla and mudslinging. The result was unprecedented levels of voter participation. This is not to say that the two parties sidestepped the major issues. Southern Whigs questioned Martin Van Buren's commitment to protecting slavery, causing some worried voters to abandon the Democrats. In addition, Secretary of War Joel Poinsett's planned militia reorganization troubled those Americans who still harbored the republican fear of a large standing army. What is more, the prolonged economic slump, which Whigs ascribed to the fiscal policies of the Democrats, doubtless drew votes away from the incumbent. Together, the politics of fear -- as expressed in the slavery and militia issues -- and the politics of diversion -- as seen in the Tippecanoe Clubs and the mudslinging -- produced a Whig victory in November.[50]

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[49] Hillsborough Recorder, 17 September, 15 October 1840; Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 3:43, 51, 64-65.

[50] Chambers, "Election of 1840," pp. 644, 654, 680-81; Cooper, The South and the Politics of Slavery, pp. 132-34, 136; Pegg, The Whig Party in North Carolina, pp. 99-100; Kruman, Parties and Politics, p. 3.

William Henry Harrison defeated Martin Van Buren in an electoral college landslide 234 to 60. With about 53 percent of the popular vote, Harrison could hardly claim a mandate. The turnabout in the House of Representatives, however, gave the Whig Party the upper hand in Washington for the first time. When the new senate met in December, it too would have a Whig majority. In North Carolina voter turnout exceeded the national average. Eight-four percent of the eligible voters came out for the August election and 82 returned for the November balloting. Harrison won the state's 15 electoral votes by an impressive margin of 13,000 votes. At least one newspaper credited Willie Mangum with marshaling the Whig rank and file behind Harrison. "Judge Mangum certainly threw his eminent talents into the Whig scale against the 'spoilers,' with a heartiness and effect that entitle him to the grateful honors of his fellow citizens," the Greensborough Patriot trumpeted.[51] In Orange County, Harrison handily defeated Van Buren and, contrary to patterns exhibited in other counties, voter turnout between August and November increased. After the August elections, Whigs had control of both Houses of the General Assembly and recaptured the governorship. Their superior organization, coupled with voter discontent with the Democrats, put them over the top in both the state and national contests.[52]

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[51] Quote reprinted in the Hillsborough Recorder, 10 December 1840; See also, Chambers, "Election of 1840," pp. 681, 685, 690.

[52] Kruman, Parties and Politics, p. 27; Hillsborough Recorder, 19 November 1840; Jeffrey, State Parties and National Politics, p. 68.

With command of the General Assembly, the Whigs were now in a position to exact their revenge on the Democrats who had forced Mangum out of office four years earlier. Before taking them on, however, the Whigs tended to organizational matters. The Assembly convened on November 16, 1840 and within four days had staffed all of the standing committees. They tapped Mangum for the committee "On Education & the Literary Fund," a favorite of the reform-minded wing of their party. Before 1840, North Carolina lawmakers had relied almost exclusively on dividends generated by investments in bank and railroad securities to fund public education. When this revenue failed to meet the needs of their state, North Carolina Whigs advocated direct taxation as a supplement. The party assigned the Education Committee the task of formulating this plan into policy.[53]

Having concluded their routine business, Whig legislators turned to a more pleasurable duty: electing two new United States Senators. During the presidential campaign Democratic Senators Bedford Brown and Robert Strange came under increasing fire for their refusal to obey Kenneth Rayner's December 1838 resolutions. On June 30, 1840, both senators resigned their seats. Denying the resolutions had anything to do with

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[53] Hillsborough Recorder, 26 November 1840; John L. Cheney, Jr., ed. North Carolina Government, 1585-1974: A Narrative and Statistical History (Raleigh: North Carolina Department of the Secretary of State, 1975), pp. 309-310; North Carolina, General Assembly, Journal of the Senate of North Carolina (Raleigh: State Printer, 1840, pp. 4, 25-26; Max R. Williams, "Reemergence of the Two Party System," in The North Carolina Experience: An Interpretive and Documentary History, eds., Lindley S. Butler and Alan D. Watson Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1984), pp. 246-47; Richard L. Zuber, Jonathan Worth: A Biography of a Southern Unionist (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1965), pp. 47-48; North Carolina, General Assembly, Legislative Documents, 1840-41, no. 2. "Report of the Committee on Education, on the Subject of Common Schools."

their decisions, Strange and Brown instead blamed Whigs for having muddled the question of instructions to such an extent that it became incomprehensible to voters. They had made the election a referendum on themselves --if the Democrats won in the fall they would return to the Senate, if not, they would step down.[54]

Soon after the Whig triumph in August Whig power brokers in North Carolina began laying the ground for Mangum's return to the United States Senate. Once Harrison was elected the question of Mangum's reinstatement seemed academic. "Mr. Mangum is the first choice of all," Paul Cameron wrote with some exaggeration, "the victory will not be complete until he is restored to his seat.[55] Other Mangum loyalists were so confident of his pending election as to request patronage before the fact. Even skeptical, long-time observers of the intricacies of caucus politics agreed that Mangum was the man to beat. The only real race would be for the second vacancy.[56]

When the Whigs first caucused to choose their senators, two camps vied for power: The "Republican" Whigs, lead by Willie Mangum, William B. Shepard, John Owen, and Edward Dudley, and the "Federal" Whigs, dominated by William Gaston, George Badger, and William Graham. Republicans, representing the states rights wing of the party, came to the proceedings determined to name Mangum to one of the vacant seats. Federals, who

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[54] North Carolina Standard (Raleigh), 8 July 1840; Pegg, The Whig Party in North Carolina, p. 66.

[55] J. G. de Roulhac Hamilton, ed., The Papers of Thomas Ruffin, 4 vols. (Raleigh: Edwards and Broughton, 1918-1920), 2:188.

[56] Hamilton and Wagstaff, The Papers of William Alexander Graham, 2:118-19; Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 3:72-73.

traced their lineage to the National Republican Party, were less certain. The major sticking point between the two factions was the question of the Bank. While Federals hoped to make the restoration of the Bank a litmus test for the nominee, their rivals held fast to the principle of senatorial independence, the same ideal Mangum had espoused four years earlier. Nevertheless, Mangum's supporters feared that their man's previous opposition to the Bank could be a stumbling block. Before the November meeting advisors urged Mangum to "disabuse" himself of rumors that he was still against recharter. When the time came, Mangum assured the caucus that he now supported the restoration of the Bank, as well as the other key plank of the North Carolina Whig Party, distribution. Having announced this on the first evening of the caucus, Mangum defused any problem he may have had with the opposition. As the delegates adjourned for the night, even Mangum's most outspoken critics had to concede that the former senator would have little trouble being elected when they next met.[57]

At their second caucus Whig assemblymen began selecting nominees. The most obvious compromise was for each faction to be accorded one of the two vacant seats. Mangum dictated to the body that he would take Brown's, the very one he had left in 1836. Because there were only four months remaining on Brown's term, Mangum was

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[57] Brian G. Walton, "Elections to the United States Senate in North Carolina, 1835-1861," North Carolina Historical Review 53 (1976):172; Norman D. Brown, Edward Stanly: Whiggery's Tarheel "Conqueror" (University: University of Alabama Press, 1974), p. 67; J.G. de Roulhac Hamilton, Party Politics in North Carolina, 1835-1860 (Durham: Seeman Printery, 1916), pp. 70-71; Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 3:58; Hamilton and Wagstaff, The Papers of William Alexander Graham, 2:111, 121, 122.

in fact voted in twice, once for the short term and then again four a full six-year term. The other nomination went to the Speaker of the House of Commons, William A. Graham. On November 24, 1840, the full assembly voted on the respective nominees of the two parties. As expected, the Whigs easily took both seats.[58]

The Hillsborough Recorder proudly proclaimed Mangum's return to the senate in bold lettering. "The Victory Completed," read the headline. Beneath that Dennis Heartt reprinted a laudatory editorial from the Greensborough Patriot. "Mr. Mangum is a powerful and brilliant man, and will reflect a splendor from the Senate of the United States upon the Old North." "The indignant spirit aroused on his being instructed out of the Senate," the writer recalled with smug satisfaction, "could be allayed by nothing short of his being instructed in again." Interestingly, the Patriot echoed the same concerns about Mangum's voting record that the assemblymen raised in caucus. The paper assured readers that Mangum had "satisfied the members [of the caucus] of his entire devotion to Whig principles" and so he was good enough for the people of North Carolina.[59]

Charles P. Kingsbury of New York described Mangum's triumph as "a vindication of truth and justice." Overwrought remarks like this were understandable; after all, the Whigs had just won a hard-fought battle against a formidable enemy. Still, nothing as high-minded as what Kingsbury described had taken place. Truth and justice had not been

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[58] Walton, "Elections to the United States Senate in North Carolina," pp. 170, 176, 177; Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 5:752.

[59] Hillsborough Recorder, 10 December 1840.

the issues in 1840; power was. Truth and justice had not been vindicated; Willie Person Mangum had.[60]

[60] Ibid, 3:78.

CHAPTER 10
VICE PRESIDENT MANGUM

Willie P. Mangum returned to the United States Senate a leading member of the majority party. Contrary to the dictates of the Harrisburg convention, it was Henry Clay's party. William Henry Harrison, the nominal head, might have assumed real power had fate not stepped in and denied him the chance. When it did, Henry Clay and his lieutenants took charge. The ease with which they moved into this position revealed a new cohesion within the Whig Party. They had purged themselves of the divisive elements that stood in the way of Clay's nationalist agenda in the past. Some, like John C. Calhoun, found themselves with the Democrats. Others, like Willie P. Mangum, converted to the nationalism of Henry Clay. In this way, Mangum was the quintessential southern Whig. A former states rights man, he now embraced the principles of the old National Republicans and followed without question the path laid out by Clay. Whig solidarity, once rooted in their distrust of Andrew Jackson, now appeared solidly based on policy questions. The period between 1841 and 1844 was their heyday. As time would show, they never again behaved so uniformly or wielded such power as they did for this brief period. This was also the heyday of Willie Mangum. A critical component of Whig harmony was the activism and partisanship of Mangum and others like him. He

subordinated his will to his party and for this was rewarded with what amounted to the vice presidency.[1]

Willie Mangum left Walnut Hall for Washington shortly after he learned of his reappointment to the Senate. Icy roads, deep snow, and bone-chilling cold made this normally routine passage treacherous. Mangum was glad to reach Washington unharmed, having narrowly escaped disaster at the hands of a careless driver in Petersburg, Virginia. His sense of relief was equaled only by his enthusiasm for the upcoming session. On December 9, 1840, he wrote to tell his wife that "the Whigs meet & rejoice more than I ever witnessed before."[2] Soon, however, the partisan bickering of his colleagues would revive his dormant cynicism. "I find so great changes here in the society of members," Mangum wrote of life in the capital, complaining of the "inroads made upon the society by the bitterness of party feeling."[3] Already he was pining for home. While the fetid air of Washington society may have dampened Mangum's spirits, it did not curb his appetite for the good life. By the Spring of 1841 he had grown fat, the result, he believed, of "eating fat dinners & drinking fat wine and living without exercise."[4] Willie Mangum had returned to his old ways. To his wife he complained often and loud of the ill will and partisan rancor that divided the two parties, yet he seemed to revel in the life he so

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[1] William J. Cooper, Jr., The South and the Politics of Slavery, 1828-1856 (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1978), pp. 155-56.

[2] Henry Thomas Shanks, ed., The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 5 vols. (Raleigh: State Department of Archives and History, 1950-1956), 3:79.

[3] ibid., 3:88.

[4] ibid., 3:147.

condemned. His fondness for socializing (and alcohol) grew, as did his taste for a good partisan fight.

The Washington that greeted Mangum upon his return in December 1840 differed greatly from the one he had left behind four years earlier. New alliances replaced old, and familiar faces, once friends, now stared suspiciously at one another from across the aisle. The Whig party was now the instrument of Henry Clay: His loyalists controlled the House of Representatives while he ran the senate. His ability to exercise such power within his party despite the presence of one of their own in the White House rested in the Whigs' understanding of the constitutionally prescribed balance of power. They argued that the executive should defer to the Congress on most issues. The President's power to construct fiscal policy or distribute patronage needed to be limited to protect the republic from executive tyranny. Clay imagined his role in the government as that of "Prime Minister." As the majority leader, Clay was officially charged with, among other things, assigning senators to various standing committees. With his favorites in all the key posts, Clay could comfortably assume that before a bill left committee it met with his approval. While his critics saw Clay's control of the day-to-day agenda of the upper chamber as part of his plan to win the White House in 1844, friends like Mangum saw him as a patriot and defended him without reservation.[5]

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[5] Joel H. Silbey, The Shrine of Party: Congressional Voting Behavior, 1841-1852 (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1967), p. 50; John Ashworth, "Agrarians" and "Aristocrats": Party Political Ideology in the United States, 1837-1846 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983), p. 169; Peter B. Knupfer, The Union as It Is: Constitutional Unionism and Sectional Compromise, 1787-1861 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991), pp. 142, 152; Thomas Jeffrey, State Parties and National

Under Henry Clay, regional elements within the Whig party united behind a nationalist agenda. Throughout the 1840s, the Whigs advanced legislation designed to promote economic diversity and regional interdependence. Southern Whigs in particular appreciated the need to move their section's economy beyond its agricultural base. They believed that national unity could best be achieved when all regions were on equal footing and when every region prospered. Whigs, both northern and southern, attempted to use the federal government to that end. At the same time, they pushed aside divisive regional and social issues. Southern Whigs now supported policies they had only recently opposed. One example of this turnabout was the protective tariff. In 1840, conventional wisdom suggested that protection profited northern manufacturers at the expense of southern consumers. As the decade progressed, however, optimistic southerners came to think that they too would someday have factories in need of protection. Relative to the creation of an industrial base in the South was the establishment of a new national bank which would finance this development. To Whigs in the 1840s, a balanced economy meant political stability.[6]

Politics: North Carolina, 1814-1861 (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1989), p. 128; George Rawlings Poage, Henry Clay and the Whig Party (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1936), pp. 19, 37; Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 3:187.

[6] Larry Keith Menna, "Embattled Conservatism: The Ideology of the Southern Whigs" (Ph. D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1991), p. 113; Thomas Brown, Politics and Statesmanship: Essays on the American Whig Party (New York: Columbia University Press, 1975), p. 171; Jeffrey, State Parties and National Politics, p. 315; Henry M. Wagstaff, State Rights and Political Parties in North Carolina, 1776-1861 (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1906), p. 72; Joseph Carlyle Sitterson, The Secession Movement in North Carolina (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1939), p. 35.

For Willie Mangum the political transition to nationalism carried with it unanticipated personal costs. Mangum and John Calhoun had been friends almost from the day the North Carolinian first arrived in Washington, and for most of that time they were political allies. By 1841, such was no longer the case. Until then Mangum had been able to keep professional differences from coming between him and a friend. Unfortunately, he also took pride in his caustic wit and did not hesitate to use it as part of his political repartee. Given Calhoun's notorious temper, a public flair-up between the two was only a matter of time. It came in February 1841 as Calhoun addressed the senate on a public land bill. Before resuming his seat, Calhoun turned to Mangum and accused him of questioning his intellect and slandering the state of South Carolina. Calhoun referred to remarks the North Carolinian had made regarding his grasp of the issue in question. Mangum shot back that he was shocked and loudly denied Calhoun's accusation. He claimed Calhoun had taken his remarks out of context and that he had intended no slight against either Calhoun or his state. This ended the exchange. At least one of Mangum's critics thought it staged, part of Mangum's effort, he claimed, to distance himself from Calhoun. Mangum described the scene to his wife with deep regret, but gave no indication that it was bogus. The fight chilled relations between Mangum and the man who in 1836 had backed him for the White House. Eventually they would patch up their differences, but in 1841 partisanship stood in the way of reconciliation.[7]

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[7] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 3:113; Hillsborough Recorder, 18 February 1841; J.G. de Roulhac Hamilton and Henry M. Wagstaff, eds., The Papers of William Alexander Graham, 8 vols. (Raleigh: State Department of Archives and History, 1957-1992), 2:182.

The first test of Clay's influence within the party came when William Henry Harrison named his cabinet. For Clay, this exercise would determine how Harrison intended to govern. Would he share power with Clay, or would he side with Daniel Webster and the northern elements of the party? At first, Harrison seemed to be playing into Clay's hands. For his Secretary of State, Harrison looked to Clay. The post, however, did not fit with his plans to manage the party from the floor of the senate, so Clay refused. Harrison then offered the post to Webster, who accepted. With each cabinet selection came new controversies and renewed animosities. Clay's inability to place loyalist John Clayton of Delaware at the head of Treasury, for example, stirred resentment in his camp. For all Clay's grousing, however, the Harrison cabinet reflected both factional and regional balance and, as one member recalled, "perfect harmony and good feeling."[8]

Harrison directed southern delegates to choose from among themselves a Secretary of the Navy. As a senior figure from the region, Mangum led the caucus. Having rejected the post himself, he was nevertheless intent on placing a Tar Heel in the office.[9] "We have determined," he wrote his wife, "that No. Carolina should not be neglected."[10] To that end, Mangum made certain that Harrison met at least one of the men he had in

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[8] Quote from, Thomas Ewing, "The Diary of Thomas Ewing, August and September, 1841," American Historical Review 18 (1912):99; Poage, Henry Clay and the Whig Party, pp. 15, 19, 21; Robert Gray Gunderson, The Log Cabin Campaign (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1957), pp. 264-65.

[9] Poage, Henry Clay and the Whig Party, p. 20.

[10] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 3:113.

mind. After some rancorous debate, the southern caucus settled on North Carolinian George Badger. Relatively unknown outside his home state, Badger would ultimately prove to be an ally of Henry Clay, much to the delight of his sponsor Mangum.[11]

For all his success, Willie Mangum still found cause for dissatisfaction. To his mind, the new cabinet had far too many northerners in it. He feared Webster and the "old Fed[eralist] clique to the North" would have undue influence with Harrison.[12] His suspicions seemed confirmed when Harrison named Edward Curtis, a Webster loyalist, to the most sought-after post in the president's arsenal of patronage: customs collector for the Port of New York. With the appointment of Curtis, Harrison was signaling to Clay that he would head his own administration and that Clay's heavy-handed machinations had not gone unnoticed. Mangum thought Clay had been misjudged by the president. "Clay's advice to the Harrison administration," the biased Mangum wrote shortly after the death of Harrison, "was always selfless & in the best interests of the Whig Party & the nation." On the other hand, the "corruption" of northern politicians, Mangum complained, knew few bounds. To him, these Whigs had outdone the original spoilsmen -- the Jacksonians -- in their hunger for office. Old enmities withered slowly. Despite relative harmony within

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[11] Ibid., 3:86, 91-92, 113-14; Hamilton and Wagstaff, The Papers of William Alexander Graham, 2:163, 164-66; Poage, Henry Clay and the Whig Party, p. 20.

[12] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 3:129.

the ranks, this generation of pragmatists refused to give up without a fight the privileges they saw as rightly theirs.[13]

Still, if the Whigs were going to survive they needed to act together and direct their hostilities against the Democrats. To that end, Clay called on Mangum to be his attack dog during the lame-duck session of the Twenty-sixth Congress. It was a role the North Carolinian relished. The question before the upper chamber concerned the senate printing contract. This plum had been controlled by the firm of Blair and Reeves, who had been installed by the Democrats. In an act of partisan comeuppance, the Whigs, led by Clay and Mangum, moved to revoke the privilege. On March 5, 1841 Mangum introduced a resolution demanding their removal. For four days Mangum argued the Whig line in the senate. William A. Graham marveled at his colleague's abilities, informing his friend, "Mangum remained until he took the heads off Blair and Rives."[14] Democratic Senator James Buchanan of Pennsylvania was less impressed, mocking the North Carolinian's transparent ploy as little more than vengeance. But it would be Buchanan and the Democrats who came up short in this round. The senate carried Mangum's resolution 26 to 18. Optimistic Whigs (of which there were many) saw this victory as evidence of their new-found power. So far the Whig era was off to a good start.[15]

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[13] Ibid., 3:128-29, 145, 187; Max R. Williams, "William A. Graham: North Carolina Whig Party Leader, 1804-1849" (Ph. D. dissertation, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1965), p. 101.

[14] Hamilton and Wagstaff, The Papers of William Alexander Graham, 2:176.

[15] John Basset Moore, ed., The Works of James Buchanan: Comprising his Speeches, State Papers, and Private Correspondences, 12 vols. (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott

The sudden death of William Henry Harrison brought the Whigs back to earth. The president died shortly after midnight on April 4, 1841. Although his tenure had been racked by factional disputes, Whigs of all stripes gathered to mourn Harrison. In Mangum's home county the local organization planned ceremonies to pay their respects. Mangum accepted an invitation to deliver the funeral oration in Hillsborough, but fell ill at the last minute and could not attend. Harrison's death saddened Mangum, who now prayed for the continued good health of Clay, to his mind the unquestioned leader of his party. He believed that the new president, John Tyler of Virginia, could be trusted to stand with Clay and promote the Whig agenda. After disappointments over patronage in the Harrison administration, Mangum looked forward to calm and to having what many believed to be a "friend of Clay" in the White House.[16]

On May 31, 1841, congress began a special summer session to wrestle with Henry Clay's nationalist program. Early indications were that Clay, seemingly unopposed as head of the party, would replace the Democrat's Independent Treasury with a national banking system in the mold of the one that went down in defeat nearly ten years earlier. The senate moved quickly to kill the Independent Treasury. Within less than one week of the opening gavel, the Finance Committee, which included Mangum and Clay, drafted a Repeal Bill. It passed the full senate on June 9 by a vote of 29 to 18, with both North

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Company, 1909-1911), 4:391-92; United States Congress, The Congressional Globe, 27th Cong., 2nd sess., pp. 236-56; James F. Hopkins, et al., eds., The Papers of Henry Clay, 9 vols. (Lexington: The University of Kentucky Press, 1959-1988), 9:502.

[16] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 3:147, 152, 155, 358; Hillsborough Recorder, 15, 29 April 1841.

Carolina senators casting their lots with Clay. Deliberations in the House took longer, but the results were the same. Again, the North Carolina delegation voted as one. On August 14, 1841 president Tyler signed the bill into law and the Independent Treasury was dead. By then so too was the possibility of compromise between Tyler and the majority of congressional Whigs.[17]

The first note of discord between Tyler and the Clayites sounded shortly after the Senate sent the Independent Treasury Repeal Bill to the House. While ideological questions over states rights and the role of the federal government in the financial affairs of the nation were central to the debate, questions of power and control proved equally important. Tyler's objections to Clay's new bank were rooted as much in his strict construction principles as they were in his practical desire to win reelection in 1844. A new bank of his own design would go a long way toward legitimizing his presidency -- something that had been questioned from the time of Harrison's death -- and establish Tyler as the leader of his party. Similarly, Henry Clay saw the bank issue as a way of staking his claim to the party's nomination in the next election and of stigmatizing Tyler as an extremist incapable of compromise.[18]

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[17] Poage, Henry Clay and the Whig Party, pp. 43-44, 71; Jeffrey, State Parties and National Politics, p. 133; Larry Schweikart, Banking in the American South: from the Age of Jackson to Reconstruction (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1987), p. 47; Herbert Dale Pegg, The Whig Party in North Carolina (Chapel Hill: Colonial Press, 1968), pp. 133-34.

[18] Glyndon G. Van Deusen, The Jacksonian Era: 1828-1848 (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1959), pp. 153-55.

The bank stood squarely at the center of the debate. On June 12, 1841, Treasury Secretary Thomas Ewing submitted to the Senate his plan, which had been begrudgingly endorsed by John Tyler, for a "Bank and Fiscal Agent" to be headquartered in the District of Columbia. To Willie Mangum and other Clay men, this plan had a fatal flaw: Branch offices could not be established in any state without that state's consent. Such a limit on federal authority threatened to hamstring the new bank by placing it at the mercy of the states. This aspect alone rendered Ewing's bill unacceptable to Mangum and vilified Tyler in his eyes. Whig policy called for a stronger, more independent institution, and Tyler, through his subordinate, had authorized something weak and potentially ineffective.[19] Tyler's actions were reprehensible to Mangum, who condemned Tyler as "a weak and vacillating President surrounded & stimulated by a cabal, contemptible in numbers, not strong in talent, but vaulting in ambition."[20]

Tyler's greatest transgression was his rejection of Whig orthodoxy as defined by the senate leadership. Their plan for a new bank, drawn up by a select committee chaired by Henry Clay, was similar to that of Ewing with the important exception that theirs would have unlimited branching powers. On June 21, 1841, the select committee, having set aside Ewing's proposal, advised the senate to pass their version of the Bank Bill. Clay knew that Tyler had constitutional objections to his plan and would probably veto it, but

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[19] Poage, Henry Clay and the Whig Party, pp. 33, 38-39, 40, 44-45; Norma Lois Peterson, The Presidencies of William Henry Harrison & John Tyler (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1989), p. 67.

[20] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 3:181-82.

submitted it nevertheless. This was now a battle for control of the Whig Party and in it Henry Clay relied heavily on Willie Mangum to act as his floor leader. Mangum was happy to oblige. He wrote extensively on the topic throughout June and July, almost to the exclusion of all else. His letters reveal his shifting moods. At times he expressed certitude that the bill would become law, at other times he seemed equally sure that Tyler would kill the bill, and with it the Whig Party. Still, he never wavered in his belief that he remained true to Whig ideals and that John Tyler had become "the most miserable man in the Republic." Adding that Tyler had misrepresented himself when he accepted the party's nomination for vice president, Mangum wrote that "as a man of honor he ought to resign or accede to Whig principles."[21]

Willie Mangum's steadfast support of the bank placed him in the mainstream of Southern Whiggery. By the late 1830s, and especially into the 1840s, Southern Whigs and Northern Whigs had united behind a policy of economic nationalism that included the expansion of credit, the use of paper currency, limited liability legislation, protective tariffs, and the bank. Mangum spoke for most Southern Whigs when he argued that these measures would help the South widen its economic base. Reassurances to that effect shored-up his confidence. Communiques from business leaders, politicians, and financiers from New York City and Philadelphia show that Mangum was both well informed and

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[21] Quote from, ibid., 3:188; see also, ibid., 3:161, 180, 181-88, 189, 194, 197, 203-205, 358; Robert F. Dalzell, Jr. Daniel Webster and the Trial of American Nationalism (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1973), p. 37; Poage, Henry Clay and the Whig Party, pp. 41-42, 47-48, 51, 57; William W. Freehling, The Road to Disunion: Secessionists at Bay, 1776-1854 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), p. 364.

warmly supported by the nation's economic elite. Ordinary voters supported him as well. Priestly Mangum noted that people in his neighborhood were questioning Tyler's loyalty and wondering if he was still a Whig. They said that Mangum spoke for true Whiggery and should stay the course.[22]

As the debate over Clay's bill carried over into its second month, Mangum began to show signs of fatigue. His schedule demanded late night sessions in his chambers at Dawson's boarding house. An occasional meeting at rooms elsewhere meant long walks home late at night. Mangum thrived in the atmosphere of boarding house politics. Here he spoke without fear of contradiction that he and Clay were of the same mind on all matters.[23] In a rare admission of his own importance, Mangum told William A. Graham "that the success of the measure & the cause of the Whig party, depended on Clay & my humble self."[24] Despite his obvious self-satisfaction, long hours in the hot, humid Washington summer left him physically exhausted and longing for home. When illness kept him from floor debates, friends expressed concern over the loss of the "mainstay of

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[22] Schweikart, Banking in the American South, pp. 3, 5-6, 20, 23, 43-45, 54-55, 221, 224; Brown, Politics and Statesmanship, pp. 170, 172-73, 186; Jeffrey, State Parties and National Politics, p. 132; Ashworth, "Agrarians" and "Aristocrats", p. 233; Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 3:192, 213, 214, 216.

[23] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 3:175, 196, 220.

[24] Ibid., 3:195.

the whole concern."[25] For a time Mangum was so sick that he spent the afternoons resting in a cloakroom in the Capitol, venturing onto the floor only to vote.[26]

On July 28, 1841, Mangum's hard work was rewarded when the Bank Bill squeaked through the Senate 26 to 23. On August 6 it passed the House and by the next day was on the president's desk awaiting his signature. Mangum could hardly contain his optimism when he wrote J. Watson Webb to tell him the news. Though a veto -- cast by an "imbecile" -- threatened the bill, Mangum allowed himself to bask, if only for a moment, in the glow of a job well done.[27] Soon, however, it became clear to most Whigs that a veto was imminent. So, as Clay prepared to revive the old war cry of "executive usurpation" in the senate, Mangum lashed out against Tyler in private. "He is drunken with vanity . . . God save the Republic," Mangum wrote August 13, 1841.[28] Three days later Tyler sent his veto message to Congress. Upon hearing the news, Charity Mangum sent her husband a note of encouragement. "I am more than astonished at President Tyler," she wrote shortly after the veto. "True Whigs," she went on, "need Christian fortitude, and great firmness to know what to do for the best."[29]

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[25] Ibid., 3:202.

[26] Ibid., 3:206, 210; Poage, Henry Clay and the Whig Party, pp. 50, 82.

[27] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 5:470.

[28] Quote from, ibid., 3:215-16; see also, Poage, Henry Clay and the Whig Party, pp. 45-46, 68, 75, 79.

[29] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 3:218.

Publicly, some Whigs held out the possibility that they could still work with Tyler and so began rewriting the bank bill to suit his constitutional standards. Privately, Mangum viewed reconciliation with Tyler as hopeless. His pessimism was well founded. In meetings with Secretary Ewing, Tyler fulminated against senate Whigs, expressing indifference as to their ideas about a second bank bill, which was at the time undergoing final revision in committee. Tyler, like Clay, was posturing for the next presidential election and no bank, no matter what form it took, would pass that session. In this climate of hostility the bill that came from the senate was doomed from the start. Early in September 1841 the second bank bill cleared the senate and was sent to the White House for executive approval. Few informed observers were shocked when the president stamped his veto on the Whig measure. The fissure between the Whigs and Tyler was now an unbridgeable chasm.[30]

Tyler's second veto prompted his cabinet, except Secretary of State Daniel Webster, to resign en mass. Mangum had known for several weeks that the Clay men were planning this move and did his best to see that it went smoothly. Before the resignations, referred to by Webster as the "Clay movement," Mangum met with key members of the president's official family, including Webster and Ewing, to discuss strategy in the event of a veto. Mangum made no record of this meeting, but Ewing later noted that Mangum had prior knowledge of the exodus and dealt intimately with Webster. Whatever his intentions, the show of party solidarity in the wake of this closed-door

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[30] Ewing, "The Diary of Thomas Ewing, August and September, 1841," pp. 99, 101, 103, 109; Brown, Politics and Statesmanship, p. 167.

meeting was unmistakable. On September 11, 1841, four of the five cabinet officers handed in their resignations. The act was a clear sign of party unity. Webster remained in office to complete negotiations with Great Britain to settle, among other things, a border dispute. While each secretary noted his constitutional objections to John Tyler's course vis-a-vis the bank, the main reason for their mass departure was doubtless partisan. Mangum and Clay had succeeded in isolating the president without alienating Webster. The next move was to disown him.[31]

On September 13, 1841, in an unprecedented display of partisanship, the Whig Party expelled President John Tyler from its ranks. Two days earlier, at a caucus attended by Whigs from both houses of congress, Willie Mangum presented resolutions calling on the party to draft a statement that would explain to the people of the country why they had been unable to pass any meaningful legislation that session. He told the caucus that all blame should be shouldered by Tyler. Mangum made it known that Whigs had to act as one and purge themselves of dissenters. The caucus unanimously adopted the resolutions and assigned a committee of three Senators and five Representatives to draw up the public disavowal of Tyler in the manner prescribed by Mangum. For the first time in their history, the Whigs acted with a degree of unity thus far exhibited only by the Democrats. The expulsion of the last advocates of extreme states rights Whiggery gave the party

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[31] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 3:215, 220, 230, 330; Dalzell, Daniel Webster and the Trial of American Nationalism, pp. 37-38; Poage, Henry Clay and the Whig Party, pp. 100-101.

greater cohesion. Willie Mangum's leading role in the episode showed him to be a key member of a self-disciplined Whig Party.[32]

The battle between President Tyler and the Whigs began anew when Congress returned to Washington after the Fall recess. In December 1841, as part of his first annual message to the nation, Tyler outlined his proposal for a new financial institution. The Exchequer Plan, as it was known, proved to be Tyler's last attempt to satisfy congressional Whigs on the Bank issue. While his plan included many of the provisions Clay had demanded in the past, it was not Henry Clay's and so it was unacceptable to his legions. The battle over the Exchequer plan would last until January of 1843, when Whigs in both houses rejected it before it left committee. Webster's initial support of the bill placed him at odds with party regulars, but his defection was temporary and soon the Whigs were again speaking with a single voice.[33]

The first shots in the Whig attack on the Exchequer were fired by Willie Mangum when, on December 30, 1841, he delivered one of his rare speeches before the senate.

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[32] Thomas Hart Benton, Thirty Years View: Or a History of the Workings of the American Government for Thirty Years, from 1820 to 1850 2 vols. (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1857), 2:357; James F. Hopkins, et al., eds., The Papers of Henry Clay, 9:616; Poage, Henry Clay and the Whig Party, pp. 104-106; Dalzell, Daniel Webster and the Trial of American Nationalism, p. 41; Peterson, The Presidencies of William Henry Harrison & John Tyler, pp. 89-90; Brown, Politics and Statesmanship, p. 169; Ashworth, "Agrarians" and "Aristocrats", pp. 171-72; Brian G. Walton, "Ambrose Hundley Sevier in the United States Senate, 1836-1848," The Arkansas Historical Quarterly 32 (1973):26.

[33] Peterson, The Presidencies of William Henry Harrison & John Tyler, pp. 96-98; Merrill D. Peterson, The Great Triumvirate: Webster, Clay and Calhoun (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), pp. 314-15; John Niven, Martin Van Buren: The Romantic Age of American Politics (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), p. 502.

The address, filled with republican condemnations of the concentration of power and tyrannical executives, showed Mangum at his rhetorical best. His allusions to ancient history and mythology as well as to enlightenment political philosophy invoked ideals that resonated with the electorate. His immediate objections to the bill, however, had less to do with idealism of the revolutionary generation than it did with pragmatism of his generation. Even before Tyler had announced his plan Mangum had signaled his opposition. His man Clay was about to embark on a bid to become president. With Clay in the White House, Mangum and the Whigs were certain to pass their program of economic nationalism. The Whiggish notion of a society bound together by common interests allowed Mangum to act in a partisan way while genuinely believing that what he did served the commonweal.[34]

One supporter described Mangum's speech as "ornate, pungent, sarcastic, argumentative and every thing else that your friends could desire on such an occasion."[35] William Graham thought it "spicy."[36] However put, Mangum was in fine form. He won praise from people of every social class and in every region. Merchants and bankers in New York City saw him as their advocate, as did lawyers and planters from the South. He commanded the respect of party members at every level of government. Mangum coordinated the activities of Whigs in North Carolina with those in New York. At times

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[34] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 5:632-48.

[35] Ibid., 3:281.

[36] Hamilton and Wagstaff, The Papers of William Alexander Graham, 2:249.

he involved himself directly in local affairs, as in 1842 when he took rooms in Raleigh to oversee the election of a new Senator. More often, however, he asked others, most notably his brother Priestly, to act for him. Supporters from across the country sent him invitations to be guest of honor at local functions. He generally turned them down or sent someone in his place. Instead, Mangum preferred to entertain guests at his spacious, well-ventilated rooms in Washington. Whether cooking salmon for John Bell and Daniel Webster or pouring whiskey for William Graham, Mangum loved to host friends and colleagues. A first-rate political fighter, Mangum also knew that charm and a well-cooked meal could be as persuasive as a "spicy" attack on the president.[37]

In April 1842 Henry Clay resigned from the United States Senate. Exhausted by more then three decades of public service and hoping to devote more time to his presidential bid, Clay left the business of governing to his trusted lieutenants. Before he left, Mangum helped organize a banquet in his honor, which was timed to coincide with the Kentuckian's sixty-fifth birthday. The celebration lasted late into the evening and was, by all accounts, a success. Although he was returning to Ashland, Clay knew he would still wield power in Washington. Mangum and a few other men served as his eyes and ears in the capital, reporting to him both well-known facts and cloakroom gossip. Clay

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[37] The Mangum Papers are filled with evidence that Mangum played a key role in local, state, and national politics. Examples of letters dealing with matters both mundane and important from the period between 1842 and 1845 can be found in; Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 3:221-22, 249, 251, 258, 260, 263, 264, 268, 274-75, 282, 291-92, 293, 332, 376-77, 387-88, 388-89, 400, 458, 469-70; James F. Hopkins, et al., eds., The Papers of Henry Clay, 9:724-25; Hamilton and Wagstaff, The Papers of William Alexander Graham, 2:190, 379, 384.

in turn sent advice and instructions to Mangum. The senator did not seem bothered playing a subordinate role to a private citizen.[38]

With the retirement of Clay, Willie Mangum assumed a larger role in party affairs. His service as President Pro-Tempore of the senate between May 1842 and March 1845 carried with it even greater power and immeasurable prestige. These were the proudest days of his life. He recalled fondly the honor of being chosen by respectful peers and the responsibility of being first in the line of presidential succession. With no Vice President -- the office remained vacant when Tyler ascended to the presidency -- Mangum was acting Vice President. From this high perch he doled out offices, chaired caucuses, and did his utmost to foil John Tyler. He carried out his duties with an eye toward serving both his country and his party.

On May 30, 1841, official word reached the Senate that President Pro-Tempore Samuel Southard of New Jersey had resigned his post. Southard had been sick for a long time so few of his colleagues were surprised by the announcement. There had been talk of replacing him, so when the news arrived in Washington the process for naming his successor was already in motion. Mangum's connection to Clay and his seniority made him the first choice of most Whigs. The North Carolinian had long coveted the post and was disappointed when he did not win it the last time it came up for a vote. On the first ballot Mangum came up one vote shy of victory. When the field thinned for the second

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New York Herald 12 April 1842; Robert V. Remini, Henry Clay: Statesman for the Union (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1991), p. 610; Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 3:282, 367; Hopkins, et al., eds., The Papers of Henry Clay, 9:724-25.

ballot, Mangum was an easy winner. The senate did not debate the question on the floor, suggesting that the determination was probably made in caucus. From this private conclave came the decision that Mangum would be the formal head of the United States Senate, and by virtue of office, the highest ranking Whig in the nation.[39]

"A long drawn sign -- Zounds! Mangum rules!" So quipped an anonymous joker in Philadelphia.[40] Mangum himself took the tribute more seriously. After his election two senators escorted Mangum to the president's chair. There he delivered a short speech in which he thanked the senators for the honor and asked their help, admitting that he did not know "the technicalities of the laws and rules."[41] Charity Mangum had mixed feelings about her husband's new position. "It appears I am never to have much of your company," she lamented, adding that while most of his friends in the neighborhood found reason to celebrate, she could not join them.[42] In contrast, Henry Clay was overjoyed. "Your appointment must have given particular satisfaction at the White House," Clay mused sarcastically.[43]

United States Congress, The Congressional Globe, 27th Cong., 2nd sess., pp. 554-55; Niles National Register, 4 June 1842; Michael J. Birkner, Samuel L. Southard: Jeffersonian Whig (Rutherford, N.J.: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1984), p. 197; Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 3:156, 354, 356, 359-60; J. G. de Roulhac Hamilton, Party Politics in North Carolina, 1835-1860 (Durham: Seeman Printery, 1916), p. 80.

[40] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 5:453.

[41] Niles National Register, 4 June 1842.

[42] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 3:357.

[43] Ibid., 3:356.

Clay understood that Mangum's new office carried with it a great deal of power. During this period the Pro Tempore made all standing committee assignments. Mangum made the most of this authority, keeping sure that Democrats never got all of the posts they wanted. While he took no part in the debates and did not serve on committees, he did suspend voting on occasion and once tampered with the official clock to allow the senate to finish its business in the allotted time. He also had more patronage at his disposal. Certain perquisites came with the job. Mangum now had "the best room in the Capitol," a salary double that of every other senator, travel expenses, and two desks in the senate chamber; that of the presiding officer and one front and center on the floor.[44]

At times Mangum was overworked, so much so that one evening he went into the wrong room and politely waited for the rightful occupant to leave so he could get some sleep. Still, the honor of being acting Vice President of the United States made the long hours seem worthwhile. Mangum often referred to himself by the title, as did the press and public. One New Yorker "made his son illustrious" by conferring the Vice President's name upon him.[45] The fact that he was first in the line of presidential succession comforted Whigs and alarmed Democrats. Indeed, when an explosion aboard the USS

Quote from, Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 3:375; see also, ibid., 3: 323, 383-84, 403-404, 411; 4:28, 47, 224; 5:762-63, 754; George L. Robinson, "The Development of the Senate Committee System" (Ph. D. dissertation, New York University, 1954), pp. 122-23; Steven S. Smith and Christopher J. Deering, Committees in Congress (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly Press, 1984), pp. 16-17; Magne B. Olson, "The Evolution of a Senate Institution: The Committee on Foreign Relations to 1861" (Ph. D. dissertation, University of Minnesota, 1971), pp. 80, 284-85.

Quote from, Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 3:51; see also, ibid., 3:362; 4:34-35; 5:439.

Princeton in 1844 took the lives of two cabinet members and nearly took that of Tyler, Mangum was reminded how close he was to the high office. Rumors of Tyler's impeachment had been circulating since the first Bank veto. Mangum's enemies feared this would mean his ascent to the Presidency. In the end, however, Mangum remained a heartbeat away from the Presidency, by all indications content with this outcome. For him, the proudest moment of his political career came, he later wrote, when the senate unanimously voted "to give me the amount of salary fixed by law for a Vice President elected by the people." Mangum knew that many in the chamber disliked his politics, but on that day all respected him.[46]

Caleb Atwater, writing in 1844, described Mangum as one of the ablest men ever to serve as President Pro Tempore and a commanding figure.[47] A second contemporary wrote that Mangum lent dignity and refinement to the office.[48] Historians have chimed in with their praise of Mangum's conduct as Pro Tempore. Lauros McConachie noted that Mangum was an "able statesmen."[49] William Brock characterized Mangum as, "one of

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Quote from, Hillsborough Recorder, 12 May 1852; see also, Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 3:456, 457, 440; 4:17, 29, 70, 218; Oscar Doane Lambert, Presidential Politics in the United States, 1841-1844 (Durham: Duke University Press, 1936), p. 54.

[47] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 3:242.

Nathan Sargent, Public Men and Events: From the Commencement of Mr. Monroe's Administration, in 1817, to the Close of Mr. Fillmore's Administration, in 1853 2 vols. (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott & Co., 1875), 1:211.

Lauros Grant McConachie, Congressional Committees: A Study of the Origins and Development of Our National and Local Legislative Methods (New York: Crowell, 1898; reprint ed., New York: Burt Franklin Reprints, 1973), p. 280.

those patient, adroit men whose skill is essential to any legislative assembly" and credited him with preserving Whig unity.[50]

Mangum's critics have been less charitable. The North Carolina Standard bellowed that "Mr. Mangum does not possess any one single qualification for such a station" after learning that he was the acting Vice President.[51] Historian Glyndon Van Deusen partly blames Mangum for "a noticeable decline in the manners and morals" of the entire Congress. He notes (without documentation) how "champagne flowed in the cloakroom of the senate," and how Mangum, "doubtless with a wry smile on his face, shifted the cost from the senate's stationery fund to that of the fuel account."[52]

During Mangum's tenure as President Pro Tempore, three issues dominated American politics: the tariff, the presidential race of 1844, and the annexation of Texas. Custom dictated that the first officer of the senate refrain from active debate and so Mangum said nothing of these issues on the senate floor. Once he left the rostrum, however, he had few restraints. As a leader of his party, Mangum organized caucuses, monitored elections, worked closely with the press, lined up votes, and raised funds. Under his leadership, the formal and informal political networks of the party promoted Whig candidates across the country and pressed its legislative package in Washington.

William R. Brock, Parties & Political Conscience: American Dilemmas, 1840-1850 (Millwood, N.Y.: KTO Press, 1979), p. 86.

[51] North Carolina Standard (Raleigh), 8 June 1842.

[52] Van Deusen, The Jacksonian Era, p. 167.

For most of 1842 the question of tariff revision vexed official Washington. According to the terms of the Compromise Act of 1833, rates would fall on July 1, 1842. With the national debt climbing most observers agreed that scaling back federal revenue would be unwise. However, plans to raise rates above 20 percent met with stiff resistance from President Tyler and representatives from the South. Henry Clay's Distribution Bill of 1841 had passed on the condition that if future tariff rates exceeded 1833 levels, the distribution bill would be invalidated. Southerners especially favored distribution and would rather see the tariff remain low than have it die. Every Whig plan to come out of committee that session called for an increase in rates, and each dodged the distribution question. President Tyler swore to veto any tariff proposal that ignored the terms of the 1841 agreement. So the battle lines between Tyler and the Whigs were drawn.[53]

Like most Southern Whigs, Mangum backed any tariff that left distribution alone. More importantly, like most southern Whigs, Mangum held that any attack on the distribution bill rendered any tariff unacceptable. The Whigs and the president waged their war throughout the summer of 1842. The first Whig proposal, the so-called "Little Tariff," was introduced in the House. Its sponsor intended it to be a temporary measure to delay the automatic imposition of the pre-1833 schedule. The bill protected distribution, much to the delight of Mangum and the Southern delegation. With their support it passed both houses, but was vetoed by the President. A second tariff bill quickly passed both houses. Again Tyler vetoed it for the same reason as the first.

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[53] Ibid., pp. 162-66.

Congressional Whigs were outraged. In the House John Quincy Adams recommended impeachment proceedings against Tyler. From the Senate Mangum, frustrated for having languished in Washington for a second consecutive summer, wrote bitterly of the President and his obstructionist colleagues.[54] Of John Calhoun Mangum grumbled, "if listened to, [he] will theorize you to death."[55]

Still, Mangum worked tirelessly to reach a compromise. He was grateful to Northern Whigs for holding fast to distribution, but recognized that the cause was lost. A third version of the tariff dropped the reference to distribution. Southern Whigs had to decide whether to vote with their section against the tariff or with their party in favor of it. With no protection for distribution, Mangum and nearly every other delegate from the South (both Whig and Democrat) voted against the bill. Even without their support, the bill passed and on August 30 Tyler signed it into law.[56] Henry Clay was generous to those Whigs who had abandoned the party line. He beseeched his allies in the senate to cast no recriminations against those who voted against this key plank in the Whig platform. "Their condition was one of such extreme embarrassment," Clay wrote from Ashland, "that I can see high motives of public duty for either course." [57]

Ibid., pp. 165-66; Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 3:207, 367-68, 374-75; 5:469, 470; Peterson, The Presidencies of William Henry Harrison & John Tyler, pp. 98-99, 101; Brown, Politics and Statesmanship, pp. 177-79; Ashworth, "Agrarians" and "Aristocrats", pp. 253-54.

Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 3:368.

Brock, Parties & Political Conscience, p. 8; Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 3:377.

Hopkins, et al., eds., The Papers of Henry Clay, 9:762-63.

Henry Clay's conciliatory tone was based on both genuine friendship for those like Willie Mangum who had voted against him on the tariff question as it was on political pragmatism. Clay knew well that the backing of the southern wing of the party was critical to the success of his presidential bid, and by 1842 that bid was in full gear. Clay's earliest and most loyal support came from Mangum's own backyard. In November 1841, Orange County Whigs gathered at the Masonic Hall in Hillsborough to listen as Willie Mangum sang the praises of Henry Clay. Before adjourning, they nominated Clay to be their presidential candidate. "I was pleased to see the proceedings of your meeting in Orange," Charles Green wrote Mangum afterward, "and more so that you made the first move."[58] North Carolina played a key role in the Clay campaign because of Mangum. He saw to it that meetings across the state echoed Orange County's call. In April 1842, North Carolina Whigs met in Raleigh to iron out factional differences and name Clay their candidate. A second meeting in 1843 affirmed the decisions of the first. After the 1842 convention Charles Green wrote that Mangum was responsible for both the meeting and the harmony left in its wake. The New York Herald agreed that North Carolina Whigs followed without deviation the path set by Mangum. His popularity was such that he had to dissuade Green and others from launching a "Mangum for Vice President" drive at the April 1842 convention.[59]

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[58] Quote from, Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 3:253; see also, Hillsborough Recorder, 25 November 1841.

[59] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 3:300, 302, 307, 312, 314-15, 321, 481; George H. Gibson, "Opinion in North Carolina Regarding the Acquisition of Texas and Cuba, 1835-1855," North Carolina Historical Review 37 (1960):7; Raleigh Register, 12

By the end of 1843, Whigs from more than a dozen states had chosen Clay to be their candidate. Whig harmony, so carefully orchestrated by Mangum in North Carolina, now seemed assured in the rest of the country. Clay's only real challenger was Daniel Webster.[60] Again, Mangum acted as peacemaker. On the morning of January 8, 1844, he invited Webster -- along with a dozen other party leaders -- to his rooms to share "a saddle of mutton." Webster replied that afternoon, agreeing to "sit in judgement of your mutton."[61] The purpose of the dinner was clear to the Democrats. Cave Johnson, an adviser to the eventual Democratic nominee James Polk, aptly described the affair as "a diplomatic dinner."[62] Mangum hosted a similar banquet in February.[63] The following month he finally secured Webster's allegiance after a drinking binge. "You may win him entirely today, after you . . . have reached the third bottle," J. Watson Webb predicted in a letter to Mangum on March 9. After so many drinks, Webb went on, "all good fellows are in a melting mood. I feel quite sure that you can, if you will, send him home an

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December 1843.

[60] Charles Sellers, "Election of 1844," in Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., Fred L. Israel, and William P. Hansen, eds., History of American Presidential Elections: 1789-1968, 4 vols. (New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1971), 1:759.

[61] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 4:9.

[62] Herbert Weaver, et al., eds., The Correspondence of James K. Polk, 7 vols. (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1969-1989), 7:38.

[63] Poage, Henry Clay and the Whig Party, p. 111.

aroused & zealous Clay man." This he did. By March 13, 1844, thanks to Mangum's mutton and wine, Webster was now "actively instead of passively" in the Clay camp.[64]

With Webster safely in tow, the Whigs gathered in Baltimore to endorse Clay. The convention, which began and ended on May 1, 1844, was relatively uneventful. After a few speeches, the Whigs nominated Clay by acclamation. His running mate would be selected by the party bosses. One of them, Willie Mangum, had decided two years earlier to withhold a public endorsement of any one candidate. Instead he would wait until the convention in the hope that this would give North Carolina more leverage in picking not only the vice president, but cabinet officers as well. To his friends, however, Mangum made no secret of his preferences. In July 1842 he told Clay that General Winfield Scott would be a good choice. Mangum had spent much of that summer with Scott, playing whist and talking him out of seeking the first spot on the Whig ticket. Besides Scott, John Clayton of Delaware and Abbot Lawrence of Massachusetts also appealed to Mangum. The name of the actual nominee -- Theodore Frelinghuysen -- does not appear among Mangum's surviving manuscripts. One name that does is his own. Supporters from Virginia, Tennessee, and New York wrote that Mangum should get the nod, while Charles Green thought the North Carolinian's nomination inevitable. As a slave-state Whig, however, Mangum was at a disability. He and the other party bosses knew that they

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[64] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 4:61, 63.

needed to balance the ticket between free and slave states. So the Kentuckian Clay was complemented by New Jersey's Frelinghuysen.[65]

For more than two years Mangum had labored to place Clay at the top of the ticket. All the while he painted an optimistic picture of Clay's prospects, repeatedly assuring his allies that the nomination was a certainty. Now that this was in fact the case, Mangum beat the Clay drum even louder. His confidence was bolstered by the obvious disarray of the Democrats. Between 1842 and mid-1844, factionalism and a leadership struggle had divided the Democrats. Judging from these circumstances, Mangum surmised that the Democrats were on the verge of self-destruction.[66]

The issue tearing apart the Democrats was the annexation of Texas. The Republic of Texas had won its independence following a brief war with Mexico in 1836. Shortly after that Mangum led the fight in the United States Senate to grant the new nation official recognition. He insisted, however, that the United States not become involved in the internal affairs of the Lone Star Republic and maintain good relations with Mexico.

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[65] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 3:242, 292; 4:14, 29-30, 66-67, 71, 74, 79-83; Hopkins, et al., eds., The Papers of Henry Clay, 9:726; Willie P. Mangum to Charles P. Green, 21 April 1842, Adeline Ellery (Burr) Davis papers, Special Collections, Duke University Library, Durham, North Carolina; Hamilton and Wagstaff, The Papers of William Alexander Graham, 2:381-82.

[66] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 4:28, 42, 56; 5:477; Willie P. Mangum to Charles P. Green, 21 April 1842, Adeline Ellery (Burr) Davis papers, Special Collections, Duke University Library, Durham, North Carolina; Willie P. Mangum to unknown, 3 July 1842, Willie Person Mangum Letters, Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections, Louisiana State University Libraries, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, Louisiana; Willie P. Mangum to David L. Swain, 27 January 1844, David Lowry Swain Papers, North Carolina Department of Archives and History, Raleigh, North Carolina.

Southern expansionists, on the other hand, wanted to go one step further by annexing Texas. Widespread fear of exciting the slavery issue along with a desire not to alienate the Mexican government by taking territory it still claimed for itself prevented the United States from considering annexation for nearly a decade.[67]

President Tyler shattered the calm in 1843 when he opened secret negotiations with the Texan government for the annexation of Texas. He wanted to define himself as an expansionist and win the upcoming election. Surrounded by flatterers who had convinced him that he could ride back into the White House on the Texas issue, Tyler pursued annexation for political reasons. The "corporal's guard," as this small band of courtiers were known, convinced Tyler that annexation would lure southern Democrats into his camp, or at least convince them to offer him their party's nomination. Failing that, Tyler believed that he could create a party of his own, built around his personality and expansion.[68]

With so many presidential hopefuls of their own, few Democrats saw the need to draft as their nominee an unpopular incumbent from another party. Instead, most seemed ready to run an unpopular former incumbent from their own party -- Martin Van Buren of New York. In January 1844, Van Buren seemed invincible. He had secured nominations from twelve state conventions. Only John Calhoun, endorsed by the Georgia

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[67] Gibson, "Opinion in North Carolina Regarding the Acquisition of Texas and Cuba," pp. 2-5; United States Congress, The Congressional Globe, 24th Cong., 1st sess., p. 378; Charles M. Wiltse, John C. Calhoun, Nullifier, 1829-1839 (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1949), p. 291.

[68] Sellers, "Election of 1844," p. 758.

convention, and Richard M. Johnson, nominated as a favorite son by the Kentucky convention, offered open challenges to Van Buren.[69] Mangum delighted at the prospect of facing Van Buren in November. "If we cannot beat Mr. Van Buren," he wrote in February 1844, "we can beat no one." He advised fellow Whigs to do nothing that might upset Van Buren's chances for the nomination and brushed aside rumors that he might not win nomination because of his opposition to annexation. Still, Mangum predicted ominously that if the Democrats nominate someone other than Van Buren, Clay and the Whigs could lose the general election. This scenario, he assured his friends in North Carolina, was unlikely.[70]

On May 27, 1844, the Democrats opened their convention at the Odd Fellows Hall in Baltimore, Maryland. The opinions of twelve state conventions notwithstanding, many Democratic Party bosses disliked Van Buren. His opposition to annexation rendered him unacceptable to expansionists. Others cringed at the thought of running a man who had, only four years earlier, suffered an ignominious defeat. Still more questioned his poor handling of the economic crisis of the late 1830s. Taken together, Van Buren's opponents proved a formidable force. They showed their strength even before the first ballot was cast when they forced the convention to adopt a rule requiring candidates to win two-thirds of the delegates before they could claim the nomination. This was enough to stall Van Buren's drive. With each ballot the New Yorker lost support, until the ninth when the

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[69] Ibid., pp. 755-57.

[70] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 4:42.

delegates chose James K. Polk of Tennessee. George M. Dallas of Pennsylvania was named to the second spot. Both the selection of Polk, who supported the annexation of Texas, and the platform, which called for the "reannexation" of Texas and the "reoccupation" of Oregon, reveal the expansionist course the party had taken.[71]

"We will literally crush this ticket," a cocksure Mangum predicted after learning of Polk's nomination. "It is a literal disbanding of the party for this campaign," he added in a letter to his brother Priestly. Indeed, the senator was more impressed by "the miraculous telegraph" than he was with Polk. In letters to both his wife Charity and his brother, Mangum marveled at the speed with which Samuel Morse's latest invention carried the news from Baltimore to Washington. Henry Clay shared Mangum's low opinion of Polk and agreed that the Democrat's had little hope of winning in November. The collective confidence of the Whig Party is captured in their famous slogan of the campaign, "Who is James K. Polk?" What began as a joke about Polk's obscurity became a rallying cry. And to the mind of Mangum and Clay, Polk was not their only boner. The Democrats, Mangum wrote, "count much on Texas & its excitements. They will be mistaken I think." But "Texas & its excitements" proved an excellent vote-getter, more potent than Mangum had first imagined, and soon he and the Whigs were scrambling to stop a threatened exodus of southern voters.[72]

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[71] Sellers, "Election of 1844," pp. 757, 763-75.

[72] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 4:127-28, 134.

On April 26, 1844, four days before the national Whig convention met, Henry Clay released a public statement condemning the treaty of annexation pending before the senate. The candidate had recently concluded a southern tour, during which, he told Mangum, he "found a degree of indifference or opposition to the measure."[73] After a review by Mangum, John Berrien, John Crittenden, and Alexander Stephens, the "Raleigh letter" was published in the national Whig organ. The senators had agreed with Clay's assessment and hoped the communique would define Clay as the candidate of peace and honor. Clay, his chief advisors, and much of the public thought annexation needlessly provocative and dishonorable. By coming out against the treaty Clay had set himself apart from the expansionists in the South and West.[74]

On June 8, 1844, the senate voted against annexation. The treaty had become inexorably linked to the presidential campaign, its failure the result of practical, not ideological concerns. Before 1844, North Carolina Whigs generally favored the idea of bringing Texas into the Union. When Secretary of State Abel Upshur first broached the subject to Mangum in January 1844, the President Pro Tempore expressed his regret that the bill would be credited to Tyler instead of Clay. Mangum had no philosophical objections to the idea, only to the fact that Tyler would reap the benefits of it. After the Raleigh letter, however, he led the Tar Heel Whigs in denouncing annexation. Only then did they voice their concerns for the country's honor, the risk of war, or the threat to

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[73] Ibid., 4:102.

[74] Sellers, "Election of 1844," p. 761; Knupfer, The Union as It Is, p. 154; Poage, Henry Clay and the Whig Party, p. 137; Remini, Henry Clay, pp. 639-40.

cotton prices brought on by overexpansion. In the end it was Clay's desire to maintain good ties with his northern allies and his wish to see Tyler fail, not an abiding concern for Mexico's sovereignty or America's honor, which prompted him to declare against annexation. Similarly, Mangum and most southern Whigs voted to reject the treaty out of loyalty to Clay, not to uphold a sacred principle or avert war.[75]

Despite his victory in the senate, the success of Polk at the Democratic convention and the popularity of expansion among some southern Whigs forced Clay to rethink his position on Texas. On July 1, 1844, he sent a letter to an Alabama editor indicating his qualified support for annexation, saying he favored it if it could be done without war or without dishonoring the country. This was not enough for southern Whig expansionists who sought a clear statement supporting the eventual annexation of Texas. Bowing to pressure from this faction, Clay issued one on July 27. Northern Whigs protested the move. The Kentuckian's once solid campaign was coming unglued. With an abolitionist in the field, James G. Birney of the Liberty Party, reform-minded Whigs had an alternative to Clay. These "conscience" Whigs became restive when Clay waffled on Texas. Conversely, southern support seemed unaffected by the policy shift.[76]

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[75] Willie P. Mangum to James Watson Webb, 20 April 1844, Mangum Family Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, North Carolina; Gibson, "Opinion in North Carolina Regarding the Acquisition of Texas and Cuba," pp. 6-9; Claude H. Hall, Abel Parker Upshur: Conservative Virginian, 1790-1844 (Madison: The State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1964), pp. 205-206; Poage, Henry Clay and the Whig Party, pp. 134-35; Sitterson, The Secession Movement in North Carolina, p. 36; Marc W. Kruman, Parties and Politics in North Carolina, 1836-1865 (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1983), pp. 110-111.

[76] Sellers, "Election of 1844," pp. 789-90.

In the face of northern criticism and Clay's vacillation, Mangum had to double his efforts to keep the campaign afloat. His most important function was raising and disbursing funds for the party. Publishers, writers, ward bosses, pamphleteers, and countless other supplicants took from his open purse. Special attention was accorded the press. Under Mangum the party subsidized newspapers to keep their prices low and save those in financial trouble. Throughout the campaign he kept up his lifelong practice of feeding Whig editors the latest gossip from the capital and saw nothing wrong with using his franking privileges to that end. He instructed junior members of congress to do the same.[77]

As the nation's highest ranking Whig, acting Vice President Mangum was a much sought-after speaker. Invitations to campaign rallies came from as far away as Fort Wayne, Indiana and as near to home as Oxford, North Carolina. Northern and Southern Whigs alike called on Mangum to come and visit "Clay Clubs" or share barbecued meat. Organizations in large cities like New York, Richmond, Providence, and Philadelphia, and small towns such as Henderson, North Carolina, Vandalia, Illinois, and Madison, Georgia, all tried to lure Mangum to their meetings. Some coaxed him with flattery, others emphasized the high stakes involved and warned of the dire consequences of a Democratic victory. At least one group professed a belief that his presence at a rally or picnic would

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[77] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 3:308, 390, 397, 402, 411, 446; 4:25-26, 55-56, 73-74, 111-114, 160, 163-164, 179; 5:476-77.

help avert this calamity. Mangum's busy schedule compelled him to turn down most invitations.[78]

Mangum's Washington office served as a clearinghouse for campaign information. The senator gathered data from various parts of the country, then distributed it to his allies. These grassroots workers carried it to the public. One grateful recipient of Mangum's patronage drummed up support for the Whig cause in his hometown of Lincolnton, North Carolina. Priestly Mangum also campaigned at his brother's request. Lower echelon party members looked to Mangum to settle disputes within their ranks and first-time candidates sought advice and favors. His high post as chairman of the Senate Whig Committee overseeing the campaign did not prevent him from attending to small matters. An engraver from New York asked him to approve a likeness of Clay to be used on a stickpin. The craftsman designed the ornament to be cheap enough for a wide circulation. To bring Clay's message to German immigrants, Mangum compiled Clay's speeches and sent them to an author preparing a German-language biography of the candidate. As election day neared, panic-stricken Whigs turned to Mangum for comfort or last-minute instructions. Doubtless, these were the most hectic and exhausting months of his life.[79]

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[78] For a sampling of these invitations see, ibid., 3:384-85, 385-86, 451, 473; 4:50, 58, 65, 107, 114, 132, 133, 134-35, 136, 148-50, 150-52, 153, 158, 166-67, 177-78, 189-90, 197-98, 201-202, 206.

[79] Ibid., 3:414, 459-60, 464; 4:15, 26, 47, 54, 60, 65-68, 104, 129, 154, 159-61, 162, 184-85, 193-96; Hillsborough Recorder, 1 June 1843.

In August 1844, Tar Heels went to the polls to elect state officers. In a letter to Mangum, who was resting at Walnut Hall, Paul Cameron proclaimed a Whig sweep. They controlled both chambers of the General Assembly and sent William Graham to the governor's mansion. However, Graham's margin of victory was less than that of John Morehead's years earlier, tarnishing slightly the Whig triumph. Mangum showed no sign of concern. Indeed, a combined Whig majority of twenty-five seats in both houses meant that he would be reelected to his seat in the senate unless a dramatic turnabout occurred in the next two years. That was unlikely given the Whigs' firm hold on the reins of power and the popularity of leaders like Mangum.[80]

With his state's elections behind him, Mangum focused all of his energy and attention on November's national election. As election day approached leaders from Maine, New York, as well as Clay himself, sought solace from Mangum. "As a Lieutenant of the Great Captain I appeal to you," a desperate Nicholas Carroll of New York wrote Mangum in early September. "You are not needed in the 'glorious old North,'" he wrote flatteringly, trying hard to get Mangum to make a campaign appearance in New York.[81] At least one Tar Heel did not think that Mangum's work in North Carolina was complete. Alfred M. Burton, a lawyer from Beatty's Ford, North Carolina, asked Mangum to bring together warring factions in North Carolina's Whig Party. "I do

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[80] Hillsborough Recorder, 22 August 1844; Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 4:169; Max R. Williams, "William A. Graham and the Election of 1844: A Study in North Carolina Politics," North Carolina Historical Review 45 (1968):42-43.

[81] Quote taken from, Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 4:180-83; See also, ibid., 4:180-84, 190-91, 193-96, 201.

not know of any gentleman in the state who has it in his power to render as great a service in counteracting this state of feeling as yourself," an anxious Burton wrote.[82]

The pressures of being pulled in so many directions at once, a demanding speaking tour, and the responsibility of leading his state's party, wore Mangum out. In late August, while visiting his brother Priestly between speaking engagements, Mangum fell ill. Doctors diagnosed respiratory distress and prescribed bed rest. The Hillsborough Recorder sounded the alarm and soon news of poor health had reached the New York newspapers. Well-wishers sent their regards and prayed for a quick recovery. Mangum remained ill longer than his doctor had first predicted, perhaps because he insisted on conducting business from his bed. In time he returned to the campaign trail. On the weekend before the election he gave his final campaign speech. Hillsborough Whigs charged that the Democrats had called a meeting indecently close to election day. So they met at the Court House in Hillsborough and held an impromptu meeting of their own with Mangum as the guest of honor. With that, a long campaign season came to an end.[83]

"All gone hell-ward," Dennis Heartt wrote Mangum when the first returns reached his newsroom.[84] Mangum's best work could not bring his friend victory in November. By the time the last polls closed Henry Clay had lost one of the closest presidential races

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[82] Ibid., 4:204.

[83] Hillsborough Recorder, 2, 5 September, 11 November 1844; Willie P. Mangum to David L. Swain, 31 December 1844, David Lowry Swain Papers, North Carolina Department of Archives and History, Raleigh, North Carolina; Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 4:205, 208-209.

[84] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 4:219.

in American history. Polk won 170 electoral votes to Clay's 105, but by a margin of only 1.4% of the popular vote. A shift of a few thousand votes in New York and Michigan would have given those states, and the election, to Clay. He did capture North Carolina -- including Mangum's home county of Orange -- by 792 votes more than Graham had won in August. The Texas issue had no effect on the outcome of the election in North Carolina, but Whigs in other parts of the South did desert Clay because of it. The November results show both the strengths and limitations of Mangum as a party leader. North Carolina was now safely Whig, and Mangum deserved much of the credit for that. However, he underestimated northern opposition to annexation. Mangum should have advised his candidate to keep to the terms of the Raleigh letter. Instead he allowed Clay to appear indifferent to the fears of northerners opposed to the extension of slavery. This probably cost Clay both New York and Michigan, where James Birney siphoned off enough votes from the Whigs to allow Polk victory in both states. Mangum was slow to appreciate the growing strength of political anti-slavery, and this would be his downfall.[85]

In December, Mangum returned to Washington in a fighting mood. He instructed friends from around the country to look into charges of massive election fraud. Associates in Florida and Alabama told of irregularities in their states. With evidence of Democratic wrongdoing in Louisiana, New York, Pennsylvania, and Georgia, Mangum and John Crittenden felt a senate investigation was in order. Still, Mangum urged caution, knowing

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[85] Sellers, "Election of 1844," pp. 795-98, 861; Hillsborough Recorder, 7 November 1844; Gibson, "Opinion in North Carolina Regarding the Acquisition of Texas and Cuba," pp. 11-13.

full well that such an investigation would appear politically motivated. Besides, with similar charges coming from the Democrats it was possible that the senate could have turned up evidence of Whig cheating. In the end Mangum and the Whigs could do nothing but lick their wounds. The fate he once thought carved out for the Democrats -- defeat and irrelevance -- now threatened to be his own. As he prepared to step down as President Pro Tempore of the Senate, Mangum was bitter sweet. Ready to get home, he was also anxious about the future of Whiggery. With Clay gone, the job of keeping the party together until the next election fell to him.[86]

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[86] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 4:224-25, 333-34, 238, 244-45, 250-51, 254, 277, 280.

CHAPTER 11
HOLDING ON

Henry Clay's defeat in 1844 had seriously injured the Whig Party. They had narrowly lost the White House and sank to minority status in both houses of congress. The election also cost Willie Mangum his job as president pro tempore of the senate. Bickering among themselves, despondent over Clay's defeat, and wary of the voters, the Whigs appeared on the verge of collapse. By 1848, however, they had rebounded. Credit for the reversal belonged to Whigs like Mangum who led the party through this troubled period. "We must avoid a collapse," Mangum wrote Paul Cameron in 1846, guaranteeing that if they did the Whigs would regain the White House in 1848. Using his superb parliamentary skills and beguiling charm, Mangum delivered on his bold promise. He knew that holding on, that simply existing, had become the raison d'etre of his party. Despite the difficulties of leading the opposition in time of war, Mangum restored health to an ailing party and proved himself a political chieftain without peer.[1]

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[1] Quote from Henry Thomas Shanks, ed., The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 5 vols. (Raleigh: State Department of Archives and History, 1950-1956), 4:514; See also, ibid; 4:252; Michael F. Holt, "Winding Roads to Recovery: The Whig Party from 1844 to 1848," in Stephen E. Maizlish and John J. Kushma, eds., Essays on American Antebellum Politics (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1982), pp. 122, 135-36; William J. Cooper, Jr., The South and the Politics of Slavery, 1828-1856 (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1978), p. 225; Douglas Arthur Ley, "Expansionists All? Southern Senators and American Foreign Policy, 1841-1860" (Ph. D. dissertation, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1990), p. 60; Holman Hamilton, Zachary Taylor: Soldier in the

The most urgent matter facing the lame-duck Congress in December 1844 was the acquisition of Texas. Claiming Polk's victory as a mandate for annexation, expansionists in Congress drafted a joint resolution to annex the Lone Star Republic just after the election. Like most southern Whigs, Mangum opposed the effort for fear it would ignite the slavery issue and outrage his northern allies. The generation of pragmatists who had governed alongside Mangum for more than twenty years had kept slavery out of national politics. Now Texas threatened to open a debate that would split his party along sectional lines. Coming so soon after the November defeat, the admission of Texas could prove devastating for the Whigs. On January 25, 1845, the House of Representatives voted 120 to 93 in favor of the resolution. The bill was then sent to the Senate for consideration.[2]

Annexation, Willie Mangum wrote one week before the senate voted, "will stir to its foundation the abolition & antislavery feeling, & lead not remotely I fear to a state of things deplored by every friend of the country." Of the likelihood of war, he added, "Mexico cannot, & England will not fight for Texas."[3] The Democratic agenda, Mangum wrote another ally, was "an outrage on the Constitution & past precedents."[4] As President Pro Tempore, Mangum could only lobby in private against the Texas resolution. The fact

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White House (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1951), p. 205.

[2] Herbert Dale Pegg, The Whig Party in North Carolina (Chapel Hill: Colonial Press, 1968), p. 143; Ley, "Expansionists All?", pp. 8, 16-17; William R. Brock, Parties & Political Conscience: American Dilemmas, 1840-1850 (Millwood, N.Y.: KTO Press, 1979), p. 146; George H. Gibson, "Opinion in North Carolina Regarding the Acquisition of Texas and Cuba, 1835-1855," North Carolina Historical Review 37 (1960):14.

[3] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 4:268-69.

[4] Ibid., 4:271.

that President-elect Polk was in Washington soliciting for the opposite -- and doing it better -- bothered the senator. By February 20 Mangum conceded that the Democrats would win, the difference being, he correctly predicted, three "fishy" southern Whigs who favored annexation. His forecast proved correct. On February 27, 1845, the resolution passed the senate 27 to 25 with Mangum voting in the minority. On March 3, 1845, President John Tyler invited Texas to join the Union. The next day, Mangum stepped down as President Pro Tempore, and by March 17 he was on a long-awaited journey homeward.[5]

The friendly confines of Red Mountain restored the battle-weary senator. Plantation routines, visits from family, friends and neighbors, all compared favorably to the hectic pace of Washington. Invitations to formal affairs, often called in his honor, came from around the state, but he refused most. In July, the University of North Carolina conferred upon Mangum a Doctorate of Law, but he did not attend the ceremony. Two others so honored that day -- President Polk and Attorney General John Y. Mason -- also did not go to Chapel Hill. Life in North Carolina, while slower than life in Washington, had its problems. Mangum's year-round duties as party chief were demanding, and included everything from building up newspaper subscription lists to advising Thomas Clingman how to deflect criticism following a duel. In that instance

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[5] Ibid., 4:269, 271, 277, 280; Ley, "Expansionists All? Southern Senators and American Foreign Policy," pp. 7, 15-16, 18, 58; Charles G. Sellers, James K. Polk, Continentalist, 1843-1846 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966), p. 186; David M. Pletcher, The Diplomacy of Annexation: Texas, Oregon, and the Mexican War (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1973), p. 182.

Mangum was more concerned with losing the support of "religionists and churchmen" in the mountain districts than he was with the safety of those involved or the morality of dueling. As much as he "abhorred" duelling, Mangum sympathized with Clingman, whom he regarded as the aggrieved party. "It was regretted that he had to fight, but it was unavoidable." "To have declined," Mangum added, "would have disgraced him here [in Washington] & destroyed his weight and influence." For Mangum, the issues at stake were honor and power; the laws of his state and the opinions of "religionists and churchmen" were secondary.[6]

Although the minority party, the Whigs who gathered in Washington in December 1845 were some of the best known and most respected figures in America. One Democratic editor even conceded that they were better than the leaders of his own party. In addition to Mangum, the Whig pantheon featured John Crittenden of Kentucky, Daniel Webster and John Quincy Adams of Massachusetts, John Clayton of Delaware, Thomas Corwin of Ohio, John Berrien of Georgia, William Archer of Virginia, and John Bell of Tennessee. With Henry Clay retired to Ashland, rank and file Whigs regarded men like Mangum and Crittenden as heirs whose time had come.[7] James B. Mower of New York,

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[6] Quotes from, Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 4:269; See also, ibid., 4:254-55, 298-99; J.G. de Roulhac Hamilton and Henry M. Wagstaff, eds., The Papers of William Alexander Graham, 8 vols. (Raleigh: State Department of Archives and History, 1957-1992), 3:46-47; John C. Inscoe, Mountain Masters, Slavery, and the Sectional Crisis in Western North Carolina (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1989), p. 301; Kenneth S. Greenberg, Masters and Statesmen: The Political Culture of American Slavery (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985), pp. 23-24.

[7] Sellers, James K. Polk, Continentalist, p. 312; New York Herald, 16 August 1847; John H. Schroeder, Mr. Polk's War: American Opposition and Dissent, 1846-1848

for example, said Mangum, Crittenden, and Clayton were "the great pets of the Whig Party."[8] Party officials similarly looked to Mangum as a leader. His influence within the party, North Carolina's Thomas Clingman wrote, was second only to Clay.[9] Representative Truman Smith of Connecticut hailed Mangum "a man of eminent ability, spotless integrity, and of patriotism that embraces every national interest."[10] The National Whig called him "a prominent actor in the scenes of the Senate," calling attention to his "wisdom" and oratorical skills.[11]

Having stepped down as President Pro Tempore, Willie Mangum could now speak freely on the floor of the senate. And speak he did, as if trying to make up for two and a half years of silence. As senate minority leader he rose often to make a point of order, call a question to a vote, recommend debate, or request adjournment.[12] He always seemed

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(Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1973), pp. 5-6; Merrill D. Peterson, The Great Triumvirate: Webster, Clay and Calhoun (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), P. 415; Brock, Parties & Political Conscience, p. 17; Arthur C. Cole, The Whig Party in the South (Washington, D.C.: American Historical Association, 1913), p. 79; Robert F. Dalzell, Jr., Daniel Webster and the Trial of American Nationalism (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1973), pp. 99, 171; Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 4:281-85, 292-93.

[8] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 5:43.

[9] Ibid., 5:459.

[10] Ibid., 5:342.

[11] National Whig (Washington, D.C.), 17 February 1849.

[12] The position of "minority leader" did not exist as such in the mid-nineteenth century. However, historian Lauros McConachie refers to Mangum as such twice in his study of congressional committees, so I have taken the liberty to extend the title to Mangum posthumously. Lauros Grant McConachie, Congressional Committees: A Study of the Origins and Development of Our National and Local Legislative Methods (New

aware of the mood in the chamber, perhaps because he frequently counted heads to see if the senate had a quorum or if his party had enough votes on a given measure. Senators from both parties gathered at his desk to discuss matters off the record. There Mangum conversed with members of his party, for whom he later presumed to speak. No Whig backbencher ever objected to this practice. Indeed, no one ever took great offense at anything Mangum said on the floor. Even his sarcastic remarks went unchallenged. At ease at the front of the chamber, he brought levity and intimacy to the senate, and his colleagues appreciated him for that. What some did not appreciate were his formal speeches. Relying on sketchy outlines instead of detailed notes, they tended to be long, repetitive and full of literary and historical allusions. At least one observer thought Mangum's style better suited for the stump or the drawing room than the senate.[13]

The elder statesmen continued to do his best work out of public view. At the start of each congressional session, for example, he privately worked out committee assignments with his opposite in the Democratic Party. The two leaders then presented their recommendations to the senate, which invariably approved the list. Senators in the

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York: Crowell, 1898; reprint ed., New York: Burt Franklin Reprints, 1973), pp. 281, 283. For examples of Mangum's behavior on the floor of the senate see, United States Congress, The Congressional Globe, 29th Cong., 1st sess., pp. 19-21, 428, 454, 488, 668, 680, 766; ibid., 29th Cong., 2nd sess., pp. 94, 99, 566; ibid., 30th Cong., 1st sess., pp. 19; ibid., 32nd Cong., 1st sess., pp. 805, 1097, 1606.

[13] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 5:417-18, 744; Niles National Register, 18 December 1847; Hillsborough Recorder 11 September 1861; George L. Robinson, "The Development of the Senate Committee System" (Ph. D. dissertation, New York University, 1954), pp. 124, 130-31; Ley, "Expansionists All?", p. v; McConachie, Congressional Committees, p. 280.

mid-nineteenth century saw themselves as members of a gentleman's club. They acted informally, as if dealing among friends. Affable, outgoing men like Mangum thrived in this setting. Yet, Mangum was even more effective outside the senate chamber. Dinner parties were his forte. He combined wine, good conversation, and humor to great effect. Diplomats, legislators, even presidents called on him at his rooms in Washington. All understood that his chambers were sacrosanct, whatever was said remained privileged and little was ever written down.[14]

So much of the Whigs' success between 1845 and 1848 rested on the personality of Willie Mangum. Friends and adversaries alike were charmed by his pleasant demeanor and ready wit. Reverdy Johnson wrote "his friends were numerous, his enemies, I believe, none."[15] William A. Graham thought Mangum "a charming, agreeable companion."[16] The most convincing praise came from James Polk, a man reluctant to speak kindly of those who opposed him. "Mr. Mangum, though a Whig, is a gentleman,"

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[14] Among the Willie Person Mangum Papers at the Duke University Library in Durham, North Carolina are dozens of calling cards from cabinet officers, congressmen, ambassadors, and other dignitaries. Many are signed and some carry a personal message to Mangum. See also, John C. Calhoun to Willie P. Mangum, 17 December 1844, Willie P. Mangum Family Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.; James Buchanan to Willie P. Mangum, 23 January 1846, Willie P. Mangum Family Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.; Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 4:254, 256, 333, 449-50; 5:325, 417-18; Hillsborough Recorder 11 September 1861; Brian G. Walton, "Ambrose Hundley Sevier in the United States Senate, 1836-1848," The Arkansas Historical Quarterly 32 (1973):29; Albert D. Kirwan, John J. Crittenden: The Struggle for the Union (Lexington: The University of Kentucky Press, 1962), p. 223.

[15] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 5:432.

[16] Ibid., 5:418.

the president confided to his diary, adding that he found the senator "fair & manly in his opposition to my administration."[17] On Christmas night 1847 the two rivals dined together at the White House. Mangum let those around him know his feelings. "I never flatter my friends," he wrote John Crittenden in 1846, "I have never flattered you - I will therefore say; that the more I know you, the more I respect and love you." Without a doubt, Mangum's greatest political asset was his personality. As it happened, Mangum's gift would be sorely needed in 1846, a year that saw the United States go to the brink of war with one foreign power and over the threshold with another.[18]

The second plank of the Democrat's expansionist platform of 1844 was the "reoccupation" of Oregon. Since 1818 the territory had been jointly occupied by the United States and Great Britain. By 1845, however, American settlers in the Willamette Valley had established a provisional government and were demanding that the United States claim sole jurisdiction to Oregon. Expansionists in the East, many of them Democrats, echoed their plea that the United States notify Great Britain of their intention to abrogate the treaty and assume unilateral control of the entire territory. Opponents of

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[17] Milo Milton Quaife, ed., The Diary of James K. Polk during his Presidency, 1845 to 1849, 4 vols. (Chicago: A.C. McClurg & Co., 1910), 3:381.

[18] Quote from, Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 4:530; See also, ibid., 4:405; 5:88, 417-18; Hillsborough Recorder 11 September 1861; Nathan Sargent, Public Men and Events: From the Commencement of Mr. Monroe's Administration, in 1817, to the Close of Mr. Fillmore's Administration, in 1853, 2 vols. (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott & Co., 1875), 1:211.

expansion, many of them Whigs, thought this position needlessly belligerent and urged their government to steer a more moderate course.[19]

But moderation was the last thing on the mind of Democratic Senator Lewis Cass of Michigan. In December 1845, he stepped forward with a resolution calling for the senate to investigate the military preparedness of America's armed forces. He had, in effect, notified the British government that United States would fight for Oregon. Before this, the Whigs had haltingly backed Polk's decision of July 1845 to negotiate with the British for a division of Oregon along the forty-ninth parallel. When these talks broke down, however, expansionists renewed their demand for all of Oregon. Leading the charge, James Polk, in December 1845, recommended notifying the British that joint occupation of Oregon would end in one year. Shortly after that, Cass introduced his resolution. Given the senator's close association with the administration as well as the timing of both statements, Whigs could rightly assume that Cass and Polk were speaking as one.[20]

It fell to Willie Mangum to answer Cass and define the Whig position. On December 15, 1845, after listening to Cass defend his resolution, Mangum offered the Whig rebuttal. He admitted that up to that point he had been pleased with Polk's handling of the negotiations and confessed he would rather the country go to war than suffer an

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[19] Frederick Merk, The Oregon Question: Essays in Anglo-American Diplomacy and Politics (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 1967), pp. 372-73; Pletcher, The Diplomacy of Annexation, pp. 301, 310, 580.

[20] Ley, "Expansionists All?", pp. 13-14, 64-65; Sellers, James K. Polk, Continentalist, p. 362.

unjust or dishonorable settlement. He added, however, that the United States must not be the aggressor, that firing the first shots in a war was uncivilized and dishonorable. Throughout his speech Mangum assured listeners that if the nation went to war, the Whigs would stand with the president and face down the foreign menace. Until then, they would be the voices of reason and moderation. He laid to rest fears that the Whigs would suffer the same fate as the Federalists who had opposed the last war. Mangum knew that their opposition to the War of 1812 had cost them dearly and in his effort to hold the Whigs together to the next election meant he would avoid the same pitfall. "When the struggle comes," he said, "there is no man in America whose blood flows warmer or more rapidly in favor of republican government." As Mangum stated, the struggle was not partisan, it was not between Whigs and Democrats. The struggle was between a corrupt monarchy and a virtuous republic. Thus Mangum criticized a popular administration facing a foreign crisis while seeming fervently patriotic.[21]

By defining the Whigs as the loyal opposition so early in the debate, Mangum had not only forestalled the likely Democratic attacks on Whig loyalty but had also foreshadowed their strategy for the next international crisis -- the Mexican War. Mangum won praise from all quarters for his moderate address. "I thank Senator Mangum . . . for giving tone - not a war tone, but a high American tone" to the debate, an anonymous contributor wrote in a New York newspaper.[22] "Allow me, Dear Sir," Thurlow Weed of

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[21] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 5:649-658.

[22] Ibid., 5:480.

New York began, "to thank you most ardently, for the enlightened and patriotic course you took upon Gov. Cass' Resolution."[23] Even some expansionists liked what Mangum had to say. Members of the "Texas and Oregon Association" of New York were so impressed by his remarks that they invited him to their annual ball. "Although they differ with you in general politics," one observer wrote, "they nevertheless appreciate, and honor the integrity of a man who casts aside party distinction, and fearlessly and magnanimously comes to the aid of his country when threatened with invasion by foreign foes."[24] Impressed by both the message and the printing, Mangum sent the invitation to his daughters and instructed them to copy it one hundred times each to practice their penmanship. The proud father then boasted, "the invitation & the note show that I struck the right note."[25] Only his brother Priestly chose to dampen Mangum's high spirits. "You don't do yourself justice in your late speech," he chided, blaming his older brother's failings on his refusal to read from a prepared text.[26]

The new year found Mangum working privately to resolve the mounting crisis. On January 1, 1846, he pressured newspaper editor James Watson Webb to attack the administration's plan to notify the British that joint occupation would cease in one year. He continued to hold and attend dinner parties with leaders from both parties and Britain's chief negotiator, Richard Pakenham. The morning after one gathering, Mangum returned

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[23] Ibid., 4:337-38.

[24] Ibid., 4:339.

[25] Ibid., 4:345.

[26] Ibid., 4:377.

to the senate to help postpone debate on an abrogation notice. For all his dire predictions and stern warnings about party solidarity in official correspondences, Mangum kept his letters to home light, cheerful, even humorous. On the day he told Webb that if America served notice war was inevitable, he assured his daughters "We shall not have war."[27] He later sent Sally a brochure describing all of the wonders of Oregon. "What say you after reading," he goaded her in a fatherly way, "Shall we go?" He closed by reminding, "Let me know if you are all for Oregon - if so - We must be off early in March."[28]

On January 26, 1846, Mangum once again rose in the senate to define Whig policy regarding Oregon. This time he proffered an amendment to a gently-worded resolution presented by his friend John Crittenden authorizing the president to notify Great Britain that the United States intended to abrogate the treaty of joint occupation. Crittenden requested, however, that Polk delay notification until the end of the current congressional session to "afford ample time and opportunity for the amicable settlement of all their differences and disputes." Mangum's proviso called for an arbiter to settle those "differences and disputes." By offering an alternative to the two extremes -- taking all of Oregon without consulting the British and maintaining the status quo -- the two leaders

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[27] Quote from, ibid., 4:345; See also, ibid., 5:482-83; Richard Pakenham to Willie P. Mangum, 18 January 1846, Willie P. Mangum Family Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.; Richard Pakenham to Willie P. Mangum, 7 February 1846, Willie P. Mangum Family Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.; Frederick W. Seward, ed., Autobiography of William H. Seward, From 1801 to 1834, With A Memoir of his Life, and Selections from His Letters from 1831 to 1846 (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1877), p. 775; Sellers, James K. Polk, Continentalist, pp. 365-66; Ley, "Expansionists All?", p. 66.

[28] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 4:347-48.

defined the Whigs as reasonable centrists desirous of settling the stalemate short of war. North Carolina Whigs, who, until then, had given little thought to the Oregon question, wrote of their appreciation. James Watson Webb of the New York Courier and Enquirer dissented from his fellow Whigs, declaring that Mangum and Crittenden had sacrificed their principles to expediency. Mangum would have been hard-pressed to argue with Webb, for such had been his habit through most of his political life.[29]

Arbitration did appeal to Richard Pakenham. He had been working tirelessly throughout January and early February 1846 to get Secretary of State James Buchanan to agree to mediation. The American rejected his first proposal because he believed that the act of negotiation itself was evidence that Great Britain had a legitimate claim to the region. When the British legate suggested that Switzerland or one of two German principalities mediate, Buchanan again balked, this time because he feared that a European monarchy would never give the North American republic its due. Finally, Polk rejected arbitration outright. Both governments issued thundering warlike statements; indeed, the two seemed as far apart as ever.[30]

Polk's aggressive posturing outraged the Whigs. With the possibility of arbitration lost, they now turned to filibuster. They concentrated their efforts on delaying the debate on the notice question. Throughout February Mangum met with leaders from his own

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[29] Quotes from, United States Congress, The Congressional Globe, 29th Cong., 1st sess., p. 239; See also, Niles National Register, 31 January 1846; Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 4:382, 395; 5:456.

[30] Merk, The Oregon Question, pp. 219-23; Sellers, James K. Polk, Continentalist, pp. 387.

party and John Calhoun, long an advocate of peaceful settlement, to plan their next move. These conferences produced a plan to extend the forty-ninth parallel boundary line to the Pacific. Once the idea was presented to a party caucus, however, timid Whigs rejected it for fear that they would suffer negative political repercussions if the plan proved unpopular with voters. When John Calhoun put the idea to Polk he too rejected it, though he kept open the possibility of compromise. The president told the South Carolinian that he would submit any compromise offer to the senate for their recommendations. So the pattern continued. While railing against compromise in public, Polk worked privately to settle the matter peacefully. While denouncing expansion in public, Mangum and the Whigs fashioned compromises that included provisions for expansion.[31]

Weary from months of fruitless argument, the senate agreed to conclude the Oregon debate in April 1846. With no settlement in sight, a frustrated Mangum delivered his last comments on the subject on April 9. "The mismanagement of the case," he scolded, "had resulted from making it a party question." "The error was at the Baltimore convention," he candidly admitted in undemocratic tones. "That was the first instance in the history of the country in which a popular assemblage took in hand the management of the foreign relations of the country." With these words Mangum reiterated his long-held, Whiggish suspicion of the vox populi. Policy should be left to policy makers, he believed. The people should vote for their leaders and nothing else. Expressly worded platforms and

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[31] Sellers, James K. Polk, Continentalist, p. 388; Pletcher, The Diplomacy of Annexation, p. 345; Ley, "Expansionists All?", p. 76.

other referenda were dangerous in the hands of an electorate easily swayed by jingoistic rhetoric. His suspicions placed him in the mainstream of nineteenth-century Whiggery.[32]

On June 18, 1846, the senate approved a treaty dividing Oregon along the forty-ninth parallel. President Polk had had to retreat from his hard-line stand and seek conciliation because he had another foreign crisis on his hands: war with Mexico. Rather than risk a second, he ended his holdout and compromised. Willie Mangum and almost every other southern Whig voted for the treaty. Pragmatism had won out over principle. Despite their opposition to expansion, they knew that the settlement on the table was the best they could expect. Instead of blocking it, they held their noses and voted yea. "I thank God that war with England has been averted," Mangum wrote his wife Charity four days after the vote. He could not say the same about Mexico.[33]

The Whig's eagerness to conclude the treaty with Great Britain was motivated in part by the fact that the country was at war with Mexico. Hostilities between the two republics had been brewing ever since the United States began annexation talks with Texas. Mexico never recognized Lone Star independence and refused to acknowledge U.S. sovereignty after annexation. The Mexican government severed diplomatic relations with the United States after annexation, a time when a lingering border dispute necessitated increased dialogue between the two states. The United States claimed the Rio Grande as

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[32] United States Congress, The Congressional Globe, 29th Cong., 1st sess., p. 635.

[33] Quote from, Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 4:452; See also, Paul Varg, United States Foreign Relations, 1820-1860 (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1979), pp. 165-66; Ley, "Expansionists All?", pp. 81-83.

the southern boundary of Texas; Mexico insisted that the Nueces, a river further north of the Rio Grande, marked the traditional boundary of Texas. Dreams of "manifest destiny" further complicated matters. Polk and his fellow expansionists coveted the rich farmland and choice harbors of California. In 1845 the president sent John Slidell to Mexico City -- a mission Mangum opposed -- with instructions to settle the boundary dispute for cash payments of 5 million dollars and to offer Mexico 25 million dollars for the northern province. He also sent agents into California itself to foment a rebellion in case Slidell's mission failed. By April 1846 the president had become convinced that a peaceful resolution was unlikely and so prepared to take the northern third of Mexico by force.[34]

The likelihood of a violent confrontation between Mexico and the United States greatly increased after both governments sent armies into the disputed area between the two rivers. It came on April 25, 1846, when an American patrol traded fire with Mexican troops along the banks of the Rio Grande. The engagement left several American soldiers dead and a president ready to unleash the dogs of war. On May 11, 1846, Polk told congress, including an incredulous Whig minority, that "American blood had been shed on American soil" and asked for a declaration of war. The Whigs hesitated, not because they opposed retaliation, but because they were troubled by the preamble. It stated the United States was already at war and all congress needed to do was to affirm this. While many Whigs agreed to fight to safeguard the nation's "honor and dignity," as Mangum put

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[34] Ley, "Expansionists All?", pp. 85-87; United States Congress, Senate, Journal of the Executive Proceedings of the Senate of the United States of America, vol. 7, pp. 9, 36; Dalzell, Daniel Webster and the Trial of American Nationalism, pp. 113-14.

it, they challenged Polk's authority to present the war message as a fait accompli. Some also questioned the suspicious circumstances that led to the first shots, quietly suggesting that Polk had provoked the war to take California. But they kept such misgivings to themselves for fear they might suffer the same fate that befell Federalists who had opposed the War of 1812. Instead, the Whigs would offer only token opposition to the war, placing roadblocks in the way of the president whenever he spoke of taking territory, focusing on fine points of constitutional law. They never openly questioned the legitimacy of the war itself. Thus the Whigs outlined a strategy they would follow for the duration of the conflict.[35]

From the start Willie Mangum proved himself the Whig's most eloquent and persistent spokesman, setting the tone on the very day Polk delivered his war message. Careful not to stand in the way of a popular war, Mangum voted with the majority but joined with several other Whigs to protest the preamble. He made no effort to block passage of the Democratic measure, which passed overwhelmingly. Upon returning to his rooms that evening, Mangum wrote of his disappointment with Polk. "I know not what ought to be done with the administration," he wrote angrily, "they deserve any & all sorts of punishment." The president, Mangum confided to his wife, acted recklessly and

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[35] Quote from, United States Congress, The Congressional Globe, 29th Cong., 1st sess., p. 796; Ley, "Expansionists All?", p. 88; Schroeder, Mr. Polk's War, pp. x, xiv, 3, 26; Cooper, The South and the Politics of Slavery, p. 227; Pletcher, The Diplomacy of Annexation, p. 391; Joseph Carlyle Sitterson, The Secession Movement in North Carolina (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1939), pp. 36-37; Sellers, James K. Polk, Continentalist, p. 364; Marc W. Kruman, Parties and Politics in North Carolina, 1836-1865 (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1983), pp. 112-13.

without regard to the national security. With the Oregon issue still pending, he feared the United States might soon find itself fighting on two fronts. So disturbed was he by the events of that day that he contemplated leaving Washington at the end of the term never to return.[36]

In the weeks and months following the outbreak of war the Whig Party searched for a position. A small group of northern Whigs satisfied their collective consciences by opposing the war openly as a violation of the territorial integrity of a "sister republic." As a leader of his party, Willie Mangum could not afford this luxury. To keep his party intact he had to set aside some of his principles. As Whig backbenchers attacked the war without regard to public opinion, Whig leaders huddled in cloakrooms to devise a safe way of taking on the administration. In mid-May Mangum hit on a solution. On the 22nd and again on the 25th and 26th he rose to challenge appropriations bills: The first authorized Polk to oversee the production of ten warships, while the second empowered him to commission officers. In both instances Mangum differentiated between opposing the president and opposing the war. Conceding the desirability of good ships and qualified officers, he refused to expand the discretionary powers of the president to get them. Combining the traditional Whig fears of presidential tyranny with a suspicion that Polk would use war measures such as these to extend the reach of his patronage, Mangum argued for both principle and pragmatism. As junior members of his party stumbled

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[36] Quote from, Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 4:435; See also, Niles National Register, 23 May 1846; United States Congress, The Congressional Globe, 30th Cong., 1st sess., p. 350; Ley, "Expansionists All?", pp. 88-90; Schroeder, Mr. Polk's War, pp. 17, 28; Pletcher, The Diplomacy of Annexation, pp. 387-92.

through the first months of the war without common sense, the seasoned parliamentarian showed them the way to qualified resistance.[37]

The following month brought with it a relaxation of tensions in both Washington and within the Whig Party. In June Mangum joined leaders from both parties to propose sending a bipartisan commission to Mexico to negotiate a peace accord. The plan came to naught, but the attempt showed a willingness for congressional leaders to work together.[38] Mangum himself continued to promise his full support both publicly and privately. "We must . . . one & all fight it out," he wrote his wife. With the anxiety of that first day behind him, Mangum jokingly asked her if their eight-year-old son had joined the tens of thousands of southerners who had volunteered to fight in the frenzy of patriotism.[39] His moderation won admiration from some and unsolicited advice from others. "You must appropriate the necessary funds to carry out the war," James Mower wrote his friend. With public opinion and the administration so deeply committed to the war, the New Yorker posed, "is it not better to jump into the stream & help direct it" than to swim against it? Mower was preaching to the choir, for Mangum had been steering this

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[37] United States Congress, The Congressional Globe, 29th Cong., 1st sess., pp. 850, 857, 865-66; Schroeder, Mr. Polk's War, pp. xiv, 26-27, 29, 32, 161-63; Larry Keith Menna, "Embattled Conservatism: The Ideology of the Southern Whigs," (Ph. D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1991), pp. 252-54.

[38] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 4:453-54.

[39] Ibid., 4:452.

course all along. Indeed, Mower's comments only reinforced Mangum's belief he was doing what was popular with rank and file Whigs.[40]

Congress' efforts to tackle routine matters suggest that Mangum was not the only one ready to return to normalcy. With the war in Mexico safely in the hands of soldiers, Democratic politicians in Washington turned their attention to reducing the tariff, a move that struck at the heart of the Whig fiscal agenda. On July 28, 1846 the senate passed the Walker Tariff, which lowered rates on most imports. The Whigs banded together in opposition, falling two votes shy of defeating it. Mangum voted with the minority, as much concerned with appeasing his northern, high-tariff allies as he was with protecting American industry. Party cohesion, evidenced by the votes on the Walker Tariff as well as by votes on the Independent Treasury Bill, the Public Warehouse Act, and various internal improvement bills, was high. Mangum voted with the Whigs every time, his partisanship as clear as that of any of his colleagues. Occasionally Mangum set aside party considerations and advocated bipartisanship, as when he co-sponsored a joint resolution authorizing the construction of the Washington monument. More often, however, he voted the straight party line.[41]

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[40] Ibid., 4:525.

[41] Holt, "Winding Roads to Recovery," pp. 144-45; Henry M. Wagstaff, State Rights and Political Parties in North Carolina, 1776-1861 (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1906), p. 76; Joel H. Silbey, The Partisan Imperative: The Dynamics of American Politics before the Civil War (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), pp. 37, 39; Joel H. Silbey, The Shrine of Party: Congressional Voting Behavior, 1841-1852 (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1967), pp. 154-208; United States Congress, The Congressional Globe, 29th Cong., 1st sess., pp. 1162.

While managing the political economy remained an important part of Mangum's job, he could not long ignore the war and the divisions it threatened. On August 8, 1846, it reclaimed his full attention when Representative David Wilmot of Pennsylvania attached a proviso to a two-million-dollar military appropriations bill. The rider said that slavery was to be prohibited from all territories captured from Mexico. Wilmot had moved the slavery issue, which had always smoldered beneath the surface of the debates about the war, to the fore. He also unwittingly brought northern and southern Whigs closer together. Southern Whigs had struggled to keep slavery out of politics for fear it would wreck the party. This is why they had opposed the annexation of Texas: New territory meant new questions about slavery. The Whigs were thankful it was a Democrat who had opened Pandora's Box, and it would be the Democrats who would now suffer the mischief slavery promised to bring to politics.[42]

The debate over the Wilmot Proviso lasted longer than the war itself. Initially, Whigs, both northern and southern, held to the party line. Southern leaders thought it best to keep quiet on the matter so as not to raise the ire of their northern friends. The southern rank and file showed less reserve, voicing dissatisfaction with what they saw as capitulations to northern antislavery Whigs.[43] Mangum responded by down playing the

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[42] Eric Foner, "The Wilmot Proviso Revisited," Journal of American History 56 (1969):274, 278; Menna, "Embattled Conservatism," pp. 248-49; Ley, "Expansionists All?", p. 98; Dalzell, Daniel Webster and the Trial of American Nationalism, pp. 123-24; Schroeder, Mr. Polk's War, pp. 43-45.

[43] Silbey, The Shrine of Party, p. 143; Kruman, Parties and Politics in North Carolina, pp. 113-16; Wagstaff, State Rights and Political Parties in North Carolina, p. 78; Cole, The Whig Party in the South, pp. 123, 137; Cooper, The South and the Politics of

significance of Wilmot, adding that the proviso would be moot if the United States acted honorably and resisted the urge to take territory from Mexico. On July 3, 1848, shortly after the war had ended, he made clear to his senate colleagues the southern Whig position on the proviso. "I am a southern man," he said, and as such would defend the rights of southerners to take their property where they pleased. "But as to this 'Wilmot proviso,'" he added, "as a practical question, I regard it as of exceedingly slight importance." Slavery, he contended, was not suited to the "bleak and sterile hills and volcanic mountains of Mexico," so the mere discussion of Wilmot was impractical. He then advised the senate not to take any territory from Mexico at the conclusion of the war. Why risk destroying the nation "for lands no man desired?" he asked, closing, "I had rather see New Mexico and California engulfed by an earthquake, receded to Santa Anna, or held in independence by its own degenerate population; I had rather see any or all of these than to disturb deeply the harmony of the Union." Mangum had spoken brilliantly for his southern brethren. Claiming to be as committed to preserving slavery as any other southerner, he warned that it was neither the time nor the place to fight. Moderation, conservatism, pragmatism, had been his watchwords all his career. Now with his party walking the tightrope on slavery, these ideals served him well.[44]

The very issuance of the Wilmot proviso suggested that the Democrats intended to make the Mexican War an instrument of conquest. It had also given the Whigs another

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Slavery, p. 240.

[44] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 5:677-68.

means of opposing the administration without coming out against the war. With the Fall elections approaching, Whigs began defining themselves as the party of a reasonable and just peace. They agreed to pursue the war with vigor, but once it was finished would ask nothing of the Mexicans. They portrayed their opponents as imperialists out to conquer a sister republic, take her territory, and with it a large population of undesirable people and host of new problems, the most troublesome of which was slavery. These were the issues on which the Whigs would run the off-year elections of 1846.[45]

The campaign season found Willie Mangum busily drumming up support for Whig candidates from all over his home state. Party workers came to him with requests for documents, speeches, and other material. As always the senator was quick to oblige. The ideological harmony pervading the Tar Heel Whigs made the job easy. Old regional divisions had faded, as mountain Whigs, eastern shore Whigs, and piedmont Whigs worked in common cause against the Democrats. As in previous races, local Whigs ran on national issues, the war being the most immediate. As the August elections drew near Mangum's mail sack grew larger. Allies from as far off as Florida and Pennsylvania reached out to him for advice and favors. Sensing victory, Mangum doubled his efforts. When the August elections came he received his reward. The Whigs had shored up their

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[45] Pletcher, The Diplomacy of Annexation, p. 469; Schroeder, Mr. Polk's War, p. 160.

hold on the North Carolina General Assembly and were poised to increase their numbers in Washington.[46]

Mangum benefitted personally from the Whig triumph that August. The first order of business facing the newly-elected assemblymen gathering in Raleigh in the Fall of 1846 was the selection of their United States Senators. The popular and powerful Willie Person Mangum was the first choice of the Whig majority. Whether the senior senator wanted to remain in office, however, was uncertain. In August and September he had expressed his growing impatience with the partisan bickering and prolonged sessions. Approaching his mid-fifties, he thought it was time to step down and let a younger, more energetic generation take charge. However, Whig victories in his state and elsewhere lifted Mangum's sagging spirits and convinced him to seek another term. Reelection was never in doubt, as North Carolina's Whigs gladly returned their favorite to the senate. They also elected George Badger to fill the unexpired term left by the resignation of Democrat Senator William Haywood and gerrymandered the state to insure their continued hold on Raleigh.[47]

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[46] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 4:316-17, 329-30, 333-34, 377, 395, 410-11, 411-12, 428-29, 438, 440, 459-60, 466-67, 477, 479-81; Harry L. Watson, Jacksonian Politics and Community Conflict: The Emergence of the Second Party System in Cumberland County North Carolina (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1981), pp. 288-89.

[47] Clarence C. Norton, The Democratic Party in Ante-Bellum North Carolina, 1835-1861 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1930), p. 147; Brian G. Walton, "Elections to the United States Senate in North Carolina, 1835-1861," North Carolina Historical Review 53 (1976):181, 185, 191; Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 4:329-30, 476-79; 496; Niles National Register, 28 November 1846; Marc W. Kruman, "Thomas L. Clingman and the Whig Party: A Reconsideration." North Carolina Historical

"Your friends in [New York] (and let me say there are many) are highly gratified & rejoice that you will come back to the Senate." The feelings of Utica attorney John Hogan were shared by loyal Whigs throughout the nation.[48] Even the once frustrated Mangum expressed optimism as he readied himself for the next session and beyond. News of Whig gains in Missouri, New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania further convinced him that if his party steered a safe course over the next two years they would recapture the White House. It was in this mood that Mangum set off for Washington in December 1846.[49]

Emboldened by a majority in the lower house, the Whigs renewed their attack on their opponents for their conduct of the war. On January 11, 1847, a representative from the Committee on Military Affairs reported a bill to appoint a Lieutenant General who would have oversight of all military operations in Mexico. The senate debated the measure for two days, during which George Badger spoke in opposition. When he finished, Mangum rose to compliment his new colleague and then moved that the bill be tabled. When another senator called for a test question, Mangum agreed. The Whigs

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Review 64 (1979):7; Ruth Blackwelder, The Age of Orange: Political and Intellectual Leadership in North Carolina, 1752-1861 (Charlotte: William Loftin, Publisher, 1961), p. 107; Max R. Williams, "The Foundations of the Whig Party in North Carolina: A Synthesis and a Modest Proposal," North Carolina Historical Review 47 (1970):128.

[48] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 4:492.

[49] Ibid., 4:514.

carried the vote and the bill was tabled. Later that month Mangum voted twice to withhold military appropriates and resisted Democratic efforts to raise additional troops.[50]

Mangum's opposition to the Lieutenant General Bill was based as much on parsimony as it was on partisanship. He told William Graham that the war was morally and financially bankrupting the nation and worried that continued spending, along with Democratic efforts to whip the public into an anti-Mexican frenzy, would lead the nation to ruin.[51] Nevertheless, he did not want the Whigs to be seen as anything but patriotic. If he made them look loyal in the eyes of the public while taking swipes at Polk, so much the better. The opportunity came on January 26 when Mangum spoke on the subject of using treasury notes to finance the war. "When the country was engaged in war," he averred, "whatever the blunders - whatever the want of foresight - whatever the lack of wisdom which had placed the country in that position - it was still the country's war, and we must stand or fall by the country." He was still angry about the accusations of disloyalty Polk had leveled against the Whigs two months earlier. Although Mangum had been working privately with Polk's allies to keep the troops in Mexico properly outfitted, the president continued to slander his party for political gain. This outraged Mangum.[52]

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[50] United States Congress, The Congressional Globe, 29th Cong., 2nd sess., pp. 165, 184-87, 278, 279.

[51] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 5:10.

[52] Niles National Register, 6 February 1847; Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 5:38-39; Ley, "Expansionists All?", p. 115.

In February 1847 Polk presented Mangum with another chance to criticize his handling of the war. With Mexico still unwilling to capitulate to the peace terms dictated by him, the president decided to carry the war deeper into their territory and move on the capital city. To do this, however, he needed money from a congress that had recently voted down a request for two million dollars. Undaunted, Polk went back to the senate and asked for three million. Mangum used the opportunity to explain the Whig position. "The object of the president," he began, "now seemed to be pretty clearly intimated to be the purchase of California and New Mexico." He indicted that the Whigs would not support such a war. Instead, he told his opponents that he was "unwilling to see Mexico dismembered" and "unwilling to acquire, at the edge of the sword, or the point of a bayonet, a single square inch of territory."[53] While some southern Whigs wanted to annex the Port of San Francisco, most agreed with Mangum that "no territory" was the best way to avoid the divisive issue raised by David Wilmot. In February 1847, Mangum was not trying to settle longstanding moral and political questions raised by slavery. He was interested only in advancing the cause of his party and "no territory" seemed the best way to do it. Mangum would continue to sidestep the slavery issue as long as it was an abstraction. A pragmatist, he responded to controversy by avoiding the problem or delaying all decisions in the hope that it would go away.[54]

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[53] United States Congress, The Congressional Globe, 29th Cong., 2nd sess., p. 309.

[54] Ley, "Expansionists All?", pp. 113, 122-24, 134, 145; Holt, "Winding Roads to Recovery," p. 159; Pletcher, The Diplomacy of Annexation, p. 551; Schroeder, Mr. Polk's War, pp. 160-61; Joseph G. Rayback, Free Soil: The Election of 1848 (Lexington: The University of Kentucky Press, 1970), pp. 122-23; Thomas Brown, Politics and

Mangum's caution was shared by most Whigs. Among their presidential hopefuls, only Thomas Corwin of Ohio made antiwar statements in public, and this probably eliminated him from contention in 1848. The conservative leadership of the party, including Mangum, Crittenden, and Clayton, spent most of 1847 distancing themselves from Corwin. While they privately admired his courage, none would publicly take his side. In fact, the Whigs seemed to be moving closer to the Democrats. In December 1847 Mangum pledged his party's continued support for the war. Substantial gains in the November elections portended good things for the next presidential election and he was not going to say or do anything to reverse the trend. Indeed, in January 1848 Mangum began to quietly advocate a peace treaty that violated his pledge of "no territory."[55]

This is not to suggest that the Whigs let Polk carry on the war without opposition. By the winter of 1847-48 the public had grown frustrated with the war and the Whigs knew it. They kept up their public attacks on the president, but chose their battles carefully, dishing out criticism in measured doses. When the president proposed sending ten additional regiments to Mexico, however, the Whigs lashed out furiously. Mangum again led the senate opposition. On January 3, 1848 he spoke against Polk's "Ten Regiment" Bill and demanded from the administration a full disclosure of its objectives. Mangum and his allies feared that Polk had come under the influence of extremists in his party who were demanding the annexation of all of Mexico. For the next two months

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Statesmanship: Essays on the American Whig Party (New York: Columbia University Press, 1975), p. 205.

[55] Schroeder, Mr. Polk's War, pp. 80-82; Niles National Register, 1 January 1848.

Mangum sparred with the Democrats, led by Polk favorite Thomas Hart Benton of Missouri. At first the Democrats disavowed the rumors. On January 20, Mangum offered a resolution to the senate requiring General Winfield Scott, commander of the army in central Mexico, to reveal to the senate Polk's instructions to him dated December 16, 1847. Mangum expected to find evidence of Polk's intention to take all of Mexico in this communique. At this point Benton stood and asked Mangum what exactly he thought he would find in these orders, for he believed Scott's mission clear: to conquer Mexico. Mangum replied, "To conquer Mexico?" "I repeat," Benton answered, "to conquer Mexico." Several Whigs then shouted "the whole?," to which Benton said, "the whole, but not to hold it all." The North Carolinian then wondered aloud if this meant the annihilation of Mexico.[56]

Polk's point man in the senate had confirmed what many Whigs suspected, and Benton's reassurances notwithstanding the Democrat's objectives seemed incontrovertible. Now a compromise had to be worked out. With American troops occupying Mexico City, the Whigs were in a poor bargaining position. The nation would gain territory, of this Mangum was certain. It remained for him to negotiate an agreement with Polk to limit the size of that territory. This would allow the Whigs to save face and prevent the United States from bringing in too many people most Whigs regarded as inferior. Mangum also feared that the voters were turning against the Whig agenda. "Public sentiment . . . is

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[56] All quotes from, United States Congress, The Congressional Globe, 30th Cong., 1st sess., pp. 214-15; See also, ibid, pp. 86-92, 171, 183; Holt, "Winding Roads to Recovery," p. 144; Niles National Register, 15, 22 January 1848; Ley, "Expansionists All?", pp. 135-36; Schroeder, Mr. Polk's War, p. 161

becoming deeply debauched in references to the war & its consequences," he wrote David Swain. "He who should go for the whole of Mexico," Mangum predicted, "will be the next president." The senator feared that prolonging the war meant the Whigs would lose the peace.[57]

On February 23, 1848, as the full senate debated the Ten Regiment Bill, the Foreign Relations Committee began their review of the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo. As one of the two Whigs on the elite committee, Mangum witnessed immediately the row created by the controversial document. The two extremes tried to tailor it more to their liking. Benton thought the size of the Mexican cession too small; Daniel Webster, the second Whig on the committee, thought it too large. Both opposed ratification to the end. Initially Mangum worked with Webster, but when he saw their cause was lost he agreed to compromise. Webster would not see it that way. So it fell to Mangum to convince the moderates in his party that Polk's treaty was the least objectionable. While "no territory" was a firm principle for Webster, it was merely a starting point for Mangum.[58]

In March the full senate reviewed the committee reports and began their debate. Again, the two extremes clashed. On March 6, Jefferson Davis of Mississippi proposed taking more of Mexico than the treaty allowed. Two days later George Badger countered that the United States refuse all territory. In the end Mangum's moderation won over

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[57] Quote taken from, Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 5:91; See also, Ley, "Expansionists All?", pp. 135, 145.

[58] Ley, "Expansionists All?", p. 150; Pletcher, The Diplomacy of Annexation, p. 562; Schroeder, Mr. Polk's War, p. 158.

enough Whigs to secure ratification. The brief debate witnessed a temporary alliance between Mangum and Polk, with the latter coming away from the experience impressed with the former. He found Mangum "manly in his opposition" and believed him to be a gentleman with whom he could work. For Polk, a man as rabidly partisan as any man in Washington, this was high praise. Mangum may have been less impressed with himself. He found the treaty distasteful and voted for it only because he believed it was the best he could hope for. While he may have liked Polk personally, he believed his war to be unjust, unconstitutional, and unnecessary.[59]

During the Mexican War Mangum showed both his worst and his best sides. Pragmatism and a fear of alienating voters left him and his party impotent in the face of a determined administration. Instead of offering an alternative to the war, Mangum and the Whigs roared and bellowed, only to submit to the will of their enemies. In the end, Polk got nearly everything he asked for. And yet the Mexican War also demonstrated that Willie Mangum was an effective politician. Understanding that he needed to hold his party together long enough to recapture the presidency, Mangum avoided mistakes that might have proved fatal. To that end he supported a limited war and redefined unionism in Whiggish terms: Expansion was unrepublican and threatened the union. The Whig Party,

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[59] Quote from, Quaife, The Diary of James K. Polk, 3:364-66, 81-82. See also, David M. Potter, The Impending Crisis, 1848-1861 (New York: Harper & Row, 1976), pp. 5-6; New York Herald, 9 March 1848; Ley, "Expansionists All?", p. 151; Pletcher, The Diplomacy of Annexation, p. 563; Schroeder, Mr. Polk's War, p. 164; Paul H. Bergeron, The Presidency of James K. Polk (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1987), p.212; Brown, Politics and Statesmanship, p. 205; Wagstaff, State Rights and Political Parties in North Carolina, p. 79.

with Mangum at the helm, retained an identity unique from the aggressive Democrats. It claimed to represent the loyal opposition, and proved this by forcing debates on all appropriations bills and trying to impose limits on presidential authority. Neither saint nor sinner, Mangum only acted in the best interest of his party. In his mind, this was synonymous with acting in the best interest of his country.[60]

With the war safely behind them, the Whigs turned their full attention to the presidential election. The party elite had been planning for this campaign ever since their defeat in 1844 and had, by January 1846, reached an important conclusion about their next standard-bearer. A few days after the New Year celebrations had ended, Mangum, Clayton, and Crittenden summoned key members of their party to a dinner to discuss their options for the 1848 contest. Before the night was through, the three kingmakers had convinced their guests that their friend Henry Clay, a three-time loser in the presidential sweepstakes, had become a drag on the party and needed to be dumped. Over the course of the campaign party operatives from every part of the country would confirm their belief that Clay was "unavailable," meaning he could not win. Clay knew his friends Crittenden and Mangum had been motivated by politics, not personalities, and so held no grudge. Indeed, he kept in close contact with Mangum throughout the race. Privately the North

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[60] Menna, "Embattled Conservatism," pp. 247-48; Schroeder, Mr. Polk's War, pp. 5, 20, 163.

Carolinian admitted that his friend Clay was the best man for the job. However, practical politics dictated that he be sacrificed for the good of the party.[61]

Having ruled out Clay, the Whig triumvirate had to choose an alternative. At the January 1846 summit the three men speculated that General Winfield Scott and Senator Thomas Corwin might make a good ticket. During the war Scott's battlefield glories helped raise his stock, while Corwin's fell because of his opposition. Zachary Taylor, another general building a reputation in Mexico, found himself also being considered. John Crittenden proved his strongest advocate, primarily because he thought as a southerner Taylor would attract those southern Whigs who were beginning to think that the party was controlled by antislavery Whigs. Mangum showed less enthusiasm for Taylor. He thought the general a political lightweight and doubted his Whig credentials. Besides, Mangum coveted the 1848 vice-presidential nomination for himself and knew that if the convention nominated a southerner to run for the presidency his bid for the second spot would be dashed.[62]

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[61] Frederick W. Seward, ed., Autobiography of William H. Seward, From 1801 to 1834, With A Memoir of his Life, and Selections from His Letters from 1831 to 1846 (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1877), pp. 772-73; Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 4:500; 5:98, 104-105, 515-17.

[62] Holman Hamilton, "Election of 1848," in Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., Fred L. Israel, and William P. Hansen, eds., History of American Presidential Elections; 1789-1968, 4 vols. (New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1971), 1:873; Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 5:105; Robert J. Rayback, Millard Fillmore: Biography of a President (Buffalo: The Buffalo Historical Society, 1959), pp. 175-76; Hamilton and Wagstaff, The Papers of William Alexander Graham, 3:107, 229.

In 1848, Willie Mangum had a realistic chance of winning a spot on the national ticket and for the first time he seemed prepared to run. His friends knew it, his associates knew it, and a growing legion of supporters from all across the country knew it. They encouraged his ambition by sending him newspaper clippings from Philadelphia, from Nashville, from Baltimore, from small towns in every region, all telling of his popularity and appeal. Some of his backers thought him presidential timber and sounded their opinions in the press and to Mangum personally. Nicholas Carroll of New York repeatedly assured Mangum that his chances of emerging from the pack of Whig presidential contenders were very good. He informed Mangum that he was hatching a plan to get the New York delegation to present Mangum as a compromise candidate to what he assumed would be a deadlocked convention. Another New Yorker, George Collins, pressed Mangum to make a bid for the nomination, assuring Mangum he had strong support in both his state and Pennsylvania. Representative Thomas Clingman of North Carolina similarly urged him to take advantage of all the attention and respect his fellow Whigs were showering upon him. Clingman thought Mangum should sell himself as a favorite son of the South capable of attracting northern voters. All three men regarded Mangum as the logical successor to Henry Clay, whom each thought tainted by failure and so "unavailable" in 1848.[63]

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[63] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 4:412-13, 282-84, 455-56, 476-79; The American Review: A Whig Journal of Politics, Literature, Art, and Science (New York: Wiley Putnam, 1845-1850), 73:126; Philadelphia North American, 8 July 1846; Nashville Republican-Banner, 16 October 1846.

Most observers thought Mangum was more likely to take the second place on a national ticket or accept a cabinet post in the next Whig administration than he was to be nominated president. Several New York businessmen wrote regularly to urge this course. Like many of his supporters, they usually spoke of Mangum as a potential running mate of either General Winfield Scott or Supreme Court Justice John McLean, both northerners, both moderates. Given his southern roots and his habit for avoiding controversy, Mangum would have been an asset for either man. He liked them both and worked closely with McLean in 1846 and 1847 when the Ohioan was testing the political waters in preparation for a run at the White House. Scott and Mangum shared a long friendship. The senator admired Scott's military record, shared his political views, and enjoyed beating him at whist. During the war, Mangum worked with other Whigs to advance Scott's candidacy, while simultaneously helping McLean with his own. In the summer of 1846 he hinted that the North Carolina legislature might endorse him during their Fall session. That December the two men met to discuss the election. At the conclave Mangum presented McLean with an analysis of how each of the potential Whig nominees would do in every state, ending with assurances that his chances were better than most. McLean relied heavily on Mangum for this kind of advice and expected to reward him with a place on the ticket. "I sink or swim with you," he confided to Mangum in January 1847. Mangum had covered all his bases. If the Whigs decided to run a military man, he would be identified with Scott; if they wanted a moderate politician, he could stress his ties to McLean.[64]

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[64] Quote taken from, ibid., 5:23; see also, ibid., 4:417-18, 422-23, 469, 480, 494, 501, 523; 5:4, 6-7, 19, 22, 42, 57-59, 82, 85, 516-17; Rayback, Free Soil, pp. 3-4, 8;

In the age of pragmatism, fence-sitting was well within the bounds of accepted behavior. Mangum's friends did not object to his being all things to all men. Indeed, it was this political virtue that had enabled him to get so far in national politics. But a Whig from North Carolina could only climb so high. Safely Whig and unquestionably southern, North Carolina was never a doubtful state; a swing state that could turn an election in their favor. Therefore, party leaders were reluctant to place a Tar Heel on the national ticket. Late in life Mangum told family members that he would have gotten his party's nomination had he been from Tennessee, a border state that produced two presidents.[65] Mangum may have had a point, but he was deluding himself if he thought his place of residence was the only thing keeping him from the pinnacle of American politics. Members of the party, including some of his friends, spoke of problems that had nothing to do with his fence-sitting or where he lived. They whispered in cloakrooms and drawing rooms that he had "become a slave to the tempting cup."[66] Early in life, Mangum's fondness for alcohol was an asset. A much sought after dinner guest, he used these affairs to ingratiate himself to the most powerful members of Congress until he became one himself. By the 1840s, however, his friends thought he was drinking too much. Social

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Francis P. Weisenburger, The Life of John McLean: A Politician on the United States Supreme Court (Columbus: The Ohio State University Press, 1937; reprint ed., New York: Da Capo Press, 1971), pp. 105-107, 111-12; Hamilton and Wagstaff, The Papers of William Alexander Graham, 3:229.

[65] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 5:754.

[66] Nathan Sargent, Public Men and Events: From the Commencement of Mr. Monroe's Administration, in 1817, to the Close of Mr. Fillmore's Administration, in 1853, 2 vols., (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott & Co., 1875), 1:211.

drinking was expected of southern gentlemen; excessive drinking, on the other hand, was frowned upon. It caused a person to lose control and with the loss of control came a loss of honor. This Mangum did with alarming frequency. His associates now began to question his fitness and wondered if he could be trusted with the presidency. Had he come from Tennessee Mangum may have been nominated for the highest office. However, he would have had to have been as careful about his drinking as its two favorite sons -- Andrew Jackson and James Polk -- had been.[67]

Mangum was not the only Whig leader with deeply rooted political liabilities. Party stalwart Daniel Webster continued to have problems attracting voters outside New England. Up and comer Thomas Corwin had talked his way out of the nomination with his unpopular antiwar rhetoric. Despite his sinking reputation, Corwin still insisted, through his friends, that he be considered for the ticket. Mangum and Crittenden promised the other Ohioan in contention, John McLean, that they could silence Corwin if he continued to disrupt the process. As much as Corwin's fortunes declined during the war, Zachary Taylor's rose. "Taylor fever," as political observers liked to say, had taken hold of the party and showed no sign of letting go. The General's early support came from the self-proclaimed "young Indians" within the party led by John Crittenden and Truman Smith of Connecticut. While very popular with voters, especially after his victory at the

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[67] Hamilton and Wagstaff, The Papers of William Alexander Graham, 3:407.

Battle of Buena Vista in February 1847, Taylor troubled political professionals like Willie Mangum because he was silent on the major issues of the day.[68]

Perhaps most disconcerting was Taylor's repeated antiparty assertions. While the Whigs had made political capital on this claim ten years earlier, and while many rank and file Whigs still insisted on proclaiming their aversion to parties, Mangum and most other leaders thought that the notion passe and that Taylor had been disingenuous for resurrecting it. "Taylor must avow himself a Whig" if he wants the nomination, Mangum wrote William Graham in January 1848. He knew the Whigs had to counter the expansionists in the Democratic Party by nominating a military hero but insisted that they delay their decision until they knew where each one stood. As of January 1848, Mangum went on, Scott was the better man and, more significantly, the better Whig. "If we must go to the army for a candidate & . . . take one from the battlefields reeking with blood, I infinitely prefer Scott." Anticipating Taylor's eventual nomination, Mangum closed by insisting Graham burn the letter after reading it.[69]

With so many influential Whigs backing Taylor, Mangum could not afford to dismiss him so quickly. Instead, he offered him a chance to define himself as a Whig. Joining with Clayton, Crittenden, and Charles Morehead of Kentucky, Mangum helped to draft a blueprint of the Whig program, presented it to Taylor, and asked him to

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[68] Dalzell, Daniel Webster and the Trial of American Nationalism, p. 125; Kirwan, John J. Crittenden, pp. 206-207; Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 5:65-68, 73-77, 77-79, 81-84, 91; Holt, "Winding Roads to Recovery," p. 127.

[69] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 5:93-96.

respond. What Taylor replied remains unknown. However, in April 1848 he issued the so-called Allison letter in which he declared himself "a Whig, but not an ultra-Whig." While this satisfied some who were troubled by his antiparty antics, it did not fully mollify Mangum.[70] In May 1848, with the national convention just one month off, Mangum remained committed to Scott and unsure of Taylor. "If we have to march a President into the White House with fife & drum, I prefer the abler man, & one who is not only a Whig, but who will respect the usages & become the exponent of the principles of the Party." Taylor, he feared, was not that man. Yet Mangum knew he was in the minority, that the convention would name Taylor.[71]

In June 1848 the national party convention proved Mangum correct by nominating Taylor. He had a strong lead on the first ballot and finally secured the nomination on the fourth. After that, the Philadelphia convention produced few fireworks. With a southerner at the top of the ticket Mangum had no realistic hope of being picked as the vice presidential nominee. Instead, the convention asked Millard Fillmore of New York to counterbalance the slaveholding Taylor. The assembly produced no platform, only an enigmatic candidate with a crystal clear war record. While Taylor was not the first choice of the North Carolina delegation, which remained stubbornly loyal to Clay during the balloting, he was acceptable because he was a southerner. They knew he would be an easy

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[70] Ibid., 5:98; Holman Hamilton, "Election of 1848," 1:869.

[71] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 5:104-105.

sell to southern voters. Fillmore, on the other hand, was alleged to have ties with abolitionists in his home state and would prove to be Taylor's albatross in the south.[72]

One month before their convention, the Whigs' chief rivals, the Democrats, nominated Senator Lewis Cass of Michigan for the presidency and an aging veteran of both the War of 1812 and the Mexican War, General William O. Butler of Kentucky, for the vice presidency. While they remained silent on the issue of slavery in the territories, the Democrats believed that Cass's advocacy of "squatter sovereignty" would satisfy both wings of the party. Cass argued that people living within a given territory should decide for themselves whether or not to sanction slavery within its borders. Congressional Whigs had similarly side-stepped this issue by insisting that the Supreme Court should decide the question. With the most troublesome issue of the day safely in the background, the two major parties could carry on the type of issue-free campaign that had defined presidential politics in the second system since the days of the log cabin and hard cider.[73]

Unfortunately for the two major parties, a vocal minority of voters were beginning to demand that the federal government deal with slavery and other issues long avoided by the Democrats and Whigs. Traditionally antislavery had been associated with abolitionists, a small band of zealots calling for an immediate end to the institution wherever it existed. A fringe movement even in the north, abolitionism was universally denounced in the

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[72] Holman Hamilton, "Election of 1848," 1:866, 869; Kruman, Parties and Politics in North Carolina, p. 119; Cole, The Whig Party in the South, pp. 128-31; Cooper, The South and the Politics of Slavery, p. 252.

[73] Holman Hamilton, "Election of 1848," 1:866, 869; Cole, The Whig Party in the South, p. 125.

south. In 1848, a more conservative antislavery movement appeared on the national political stage. The Free-Soil Party, which combined Van Buren Democrats with ex-Liberty Party loyalists, campaigned on a platform of prohibiting slavery in the territories but insisted that it remain untouched where it already existed. This promised to broaden the appeal of the antislavery movement. In August 1848 the Free-Soil convention nominated Martin Van Buren and Charles Francis Adams as their first and second candidates.[74]

A second single-issue party entered presidential politics that election season. The Native American Party, a collection of xenophobes committed to limiting the rights of immigrants, set up organizations in several northern states. The Pennsylvania chapter offered their presidential nomination to Willie Mangum, but like most mainstream politicians he ignored them. Without Mangum or any other major figure behind them, this manifestation of political nativism ran aground in 1848. Nevertheless, the emergence of antislavery and nativist political parties in 1848 portended trouble for the two major parties, who were seen by frustrated voters as carbon copies of one another, that is as electoral machines whose only purpose was winning elections and doling out offices. In many respects these critics were correct.[75]

In 1848 Mangum understood that antislavery and nativism were not the real enemies, the Democrats were. Having accepted the dictates of the national convention,

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[74] Holman Hamilton, "Election of 1848," 1:870-71; Rayback, Free Soil, p. 54.

[75] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 5:62.

he campaigned vigorously for Zachary Taylor. While occasionally attacking the Free-Soilers, Mangum reserved most of his barbs for Cass. On July 3, 1848, in what began as a speech denouncing expansionists who wanted to take Cuba, Mangum tore into Cass. His theatrics included props, such as two pamphlets -- one labeled "North," the other "South" -- which he said had been issued by the Democrats. He accused Cass of running one campaign in the North, where he pledged his support for the Wilmot Proviso, and another in the South, where he denounced it. He also pointed out the logical fallacies of popular sovereignty, saying that the people of New Mexico, for example, could not pass laws without first receiving the authority to do so from Congress. Moreover, he noted, the people living in this territory were "either black or mixed -- in morals scarcely above the brutes; in intelligence depressed to nearly the lowest point of rational creatures," and therefore incapable of governing themselves. Cass used popular sovereignty, Mangum argued, to evade the Free Soil question. The North Carolinian could easily recognize this talent, for he too had skirted these issues as skillfully as Cass. He did it again during this speech when he upheld the right of southerners to bring their property into the territories while conceding that congress could, if it wanted, ban slavery in the territories. He assured southerners, however, that this would not be done without their consent. The speech bore all of the trademarks of a Mangum oration, meaning it was bitterly partisan, replete with dubious assumptions, and exceedingly long.[76]

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[76] The quote is taken from, ibid., 5:666. For the entire text see, ibid., 5:658-690.

Zachary Taylor, once described by Mangum as unworthy of the Whig nomination, was now, just a few months later, "the true representative of all the great conservative characteristics of the Whig Party."[77] As such, the general was deserving of all the resources at Mangum's disposal. The senator managed the Whig Executive Committee in Washington, D.C., which distributed pro-Whig literature to anyone who asked. In September 1848 Taylor helped himself by saying he supported Whig limits on executive authority. This timeless Whig principle reassured party leaders like Mangum that they would be able to control Taylor. It also impressed Whig voters who continued to believe in republican and antiparty ideals.[78]

In November 1848 the voters went to the polls and elected Zachary Taylor their president. For the third consecutive time North Carolina went to the Whigs and Willie Mangum deserved much of the credit for that. "I express my individual thanks to you for the brilliant & effective services rendered by you in this great struggle for freedom," Hugh Waddell wrote Mangum the next month. The senator was resting at Walnut Hall when he received news of Taylor's victory. It was a good time for Willie Mangum. He had held the party together through a war and through a presidential campaign that could have easily been disrupted by internal discord. He had cast aside his friends Clay, McLean, and Scott for a man he did not approve but accepted for the good of the party. The period between 1845 and 1848 show the senior senator from North Carolina at his pragmatic best -- as a

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[77] Ibid., 5:689-90.

[78] Ibid., 5:108-109, 112; Holman Hamilton, "Election of 1848," 1:884-85.

man of high ambition and flexible principles, a man who recognized that the power in American politics rested with those who made the kings as much as it rested with the kings themselves. This is why he could ask Clay, McLean, and Scott to stand aside and let another sit on the throne, for he knew they would be behind it. Taylor, he believed, would give them what they deserved, he would give them the spoils of office and he would support their agenda. If not, they would hold on for another four years and then pick someone who would.[79]

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[79] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 5:133.

EPILOGUE
TWILIGHT OF THE PRAGMATISTS

On March 2, 1849, Willie Mangum sat at his desk at the front of the Senate chamber listening impatiently as two junior members argued about the minor details of an unimportant bill. Finally, after having endured enough, he rose. "During the last session, and during the present session," Mangum complained, "the Senate of the United States has become a mere polemical body. The smallest questions are discussed, as if Senators could understand nothing without tedious and wearisome debate," and this, he said, was "a ruinous waste of time."[1] He was right, they were talking more than ever, and not only about things he thought unimportant, but about matters once discussed privately. On December 18, 1849, for instance, Free-Soil Senator John Hale of New Hampshire objected to Mangum's request that committee chairs be appointed without a vote. When Mangum reminded Hale that this was common practice and that the senate needed to move on to more important business, Democratic Senator Stephen A. Douglas of Illinois asked why Mangum was in such a hurry. Clearly, Mangum did not understand this new generation, and they did not understand him. The two generations were about to blunder into one

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[1] United States Congress, The Congressional Globe, 30th Cong., 2nd sess., pp. 648-49.

another and leave amid the wreckage the second party system, and with it, the political career of Willie P. Mangum.[2]

As his political career drew nearer its end Willie Mangum became increasingly frustrated and tired. His malaise arose partly because Taylor had refused to recognize his political expertise and importance as a Whig. Like many of Henry Clay's friends, Willie Mangum was passed over when Taylor bestowed patronage on the faithful. Worse still, Mangum could not secure any high-profile positions for his friends. His inability to get fellow North Carolinian Hugh Waddell an ambassadorship shamed him before his supporters and demonstrated that the administration preferred the opposing faction. Even more distressing was the growing influence of Senator William Henry Seward. A New Yorker with abolitionist sympathies, he would become the power behind the president. Southern Whigs like Mangum grew increasingly alarmed, fearing that abolitionists were taking control of the party. He did not like Seward; indeed, he mistrusted most of Taylor's inner circle. Soon he was disconnected from an administration he had helped bring to power.[3]

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[2] Quote from, ibid., 31st Cong., 1st sess., pp. 39-41; See also, ibid., 32nd Cong., 1st sess., pp. 947, 659, 1606; 32nd Cong., 2nd sess., appendix, p. 132; Mangum's contention that the senate was talking more than ever is supported by an examination of the Congressional Globe over an eighteen-year period. During the 23rd Congress, which meet between 1833 and 1835, the entire record was only 812 pages long, while the 31st Congress of 1849-1851 produced over 3000 pages of official records.

[3] Henry Thomas Shanks, ed., The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 5 vols. (Raleigh: State Department of Archives and History, 1950-1956), 5:136, 143, 149, 151, 155, 159, 166-68; Holman Hamilton, Zachary Taylor: Soldier in the White House (Indianapolis: The obbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1951), p. 234; Arthur C. Cole, The Whig Party in the South (Washington, D.C.: American Historical Association, 1913), pp. 151-52; Norman D.

Nevertheless, Mangum continued to work as a leader of his party. With Henry Clay back in the senate, it may have appeared to him that the upper chamber would conduct business in its usual fashion. Cabinet officers would enter the senate and walk directly to Mangum's desk. There they would quietly converse out of the earshot of the other members. But this style of politics was on the wane. The leaders of the Whig Party were growing old and less effective as younger and more aggressive politicians began raising issues once thought taboo. Slavery and temperance, for example, became the subjects of heated debates. Blind to the changing political climate, Mangum attempted to silence those who wanted to cast out the timeworn practices and tacit agreements of his age. When one senator raised the temperance issue, Mangum declared, "I very much doubt the wisdom of bringing this subject into the arena of party politics." He even tried to revive the gag rule when another submitted his antislavery petitions to the senate. He was oblivious to an electorate that had grown so ideological. Knowing well the divisiveness of issues like slavery, his generation suppressed discussion, evaded tough decisions, and concentrated on what they thought was achievable without undue fuss and recrimination.[4]

Brown, Edward Stanly: Whiggery's Tarheel "Conqueror" (University: University of Alabama Press, 1974), pp. 120-21; United States Congress, The Congressional Globe, 31st Cong., 2nd sess., p. 78.

[4] Quote taken from, Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 5:740; See also, ibid., 203-204; United States Congress, The Congressional Globe, 30th Cong., 1st sess., pp. 310-11; ibid., 31st Cong., 1st sess., p. 119; ibid., 32nd Cong., 1st. sess., pp. 1474-75; Douglas Arthur Ley, "Expansionists All? Southern Senators and American Foreign Policy, 1841-1860" (Ph. D. dissertation, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1990), p. 188.

The failed style of one generation and the impatience of the next came together in the sectional crisis of 1850. Mangum stood in the eye of the storm -- where he had been for nearly thirty years. In 1849 and 1850 the politics of slavery made ordinary political business nearly impossible. The controversy was primarily linked to the status of the peculiar institution in the territories taken from Mexico, but such related questions as the fugitive slave law and the slave trade in the District of Columbia added to the agitation. Mangum's generation decided to solve the problem with a compromise fashioned behind closed doors, a style that had long since become habitual. The Senate assembled an ad hoc "committee of thirteen," which included Henry Clay and Willie Mangum, and instructed it to settle these issues. The old guard emerged from their deliberations with an omnibus package that had something to offend everyone. When an unhappy majority rejected the great compromiser's last effort, Clay abandoned Washington. At that instant a spokesman for the new generation, Stephen Douglas, took over. He broke the package into its component parts, formed separate coalitions for each, and pushed them through the senate. His tactics reflected the politics of the new generation in at least two ways. First, he relied on sectional blocs to carry each bill. Clay tried to unite conservatives from both parties and both sections. Second, unlike Clay, Douglas worked openly and with men at all levels of experience. Clay's committee consisted mainly of the aging leadership cadres of both parties, many of whom, like Mangum, saw the battle as just another power struggle.[5]

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[5] Peter B. Knupfer, The Union as It Is: Constitutional Unionism and Sectional Compromise, 1787-1861 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991), pp. 181-195; Frank H. Hodder, "The Authorship of the Compromise of 1850," Mississippi Valley Historical Review 22 (1936):526, 536; Hillsborough Recorder, 1 May 1850;

Mangum played an important part in the compromise struggle. In March he persuaded a hesitant Daniel Webster to take a public stand on the omnibus bill. The result was Webster's famous "Seventh of March Speech," perhaps the most acclaimed -- and despised -- oration of the celebrated orator's career. Mangum also had an important influence on the events surrounding another of the famous speeches delivered during the compromise debates. At the conclusion of William Seward's so-called "Higher Law" speech, Mangum stormed into the Oval Office and demanded that a stunned president immediately renounce his lieutenant. Mangum left Taylor muttering incoherently, visibly upset and understandably concerned. Within days Taylor did just as Mangum asked, the North Carolinian's threat to leave the party and take the southern wing with him apparently was enough to jar the president. Arm twisting and bullying still served the old senator well, even at this late date.[6]

Ironically, these same heavy-handed tactics eventually cost Mangum his career. On April 15, 1852, he told the senate he intended to back Winfield Scott in that year's presidential race. Five days later congressional Whigs met to make their choice and Willie Mangum was there to see that it went his way. As the presiding officer he silenced all

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United States Congress, The Congressional Globe, 31st Cong., 1st sess., p. 780; Robert V. Remini, Henry Clay: Statesman for the Union (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1991), pp. 746, 757; George Rawlings Poage, Henry Clay and the Whig Party (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1936), pp. 221, 225; Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 5:691-93.

[6] Poage, Henry Clay and the Whig Party, pp. 209-210; Harper's New Monthly Magazine, vol. 47, p. 589; Allan Nevins, Ordeal of the Union, vol. 1: Fruits of Manifest Destiny (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1947), p. 301; Hamilton, Zachary Taylor, pp. 321-22.

opposition to Scott and set the time and place of the national convention. By the time the meeting was over several southern Whigs had taken their leave, enraged by Mangum's dictatorial ways and Scott's alleged ties to Seward. They had demanded that Scott endorse the Compromise of 1850 as the last word on the slavery question. When Mangum told them that was unnecessary and would only reignite the debate, the dissatisfied southerners bolted. Southern editors and politicians, both Whig and Democrat, accused Mangum of turning against his section for the sake of winning the vice presidency. When he was offered the nomination he refused it because he knew he had alienated the voters of his section and would be a drag on the ticket in the south. In backing Scott over such overwhelming opposition Mangum showed how little he understood the politics of slavery. Scott was "available" and that was all that mattered to him, so that was all that should have mattered to everyone else. He did not see that ideologues had supplanted mechanics like himself; he did not know that patronage and balanced tickets would no longer appease the disaffected. The practices of the previous era were ill-suited to this new age, and this he did not grasp.[7]

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[7] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 5:152, 226-29, 234, 725-45; United States Congress, The Congressional Globe, 32nd Cong., 1st sess., pp. 1159-60, appendix, p. 622; North Carolina Standard (Raleigh), 28 April 1852; Raleigh Register, 17 March, 28 April, 26 May 1852; Raleigh Star, 21 April 1852; New York Times, 22 June 1852; Hillsborough Recorder, 28 April 1852; New York Tribune, 21 April 1852; J. G. de Roulhac Hamilton and Henry M. Wagstaff, eds., The Papers of William Alexander Graham, 8 vols. (Raleigh: State Department of Archives and History, 1957-1992), 4:295, 302-303; James R. Morrill, "The Presidential Election of 1852: Death Knell of the Whig Party in North Carolina," North Carolina Historical Review 44 (1967):346-48; Larry Keith Menna, "Embattled Conservatism: The Ideology of the Southern Whigs" (Ph. D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1991), p. 401; Roy and Jeannette Nichols, "Election of 1852," in Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., Fred L. Israel, and William P. Hansen, eds.,

"I am an old man & feel I have misspent much of my life," Willie Mangum lamented in January 1853, adding that he should have given up politics twenty years earlier.[8] The years between 1849 and 1852 were difficult ones for the senator. It was then that his brother Priestly, his friends John Calhoun, Henry Clay, and Daniel Webster all died. Mangum's own health deteriorated as well. An almost fatal fall early in 1851 left him bedridden for months and caused him pain for the rest of his life. Also during this time his wife came close to death, his rooming house burned to the ground, his party collapsed, and his reputation declined. Old friends noticed that he was drinking too much and too often. Younger men condemned him for being drunk in the senate chamber, mocked his overbearing nature, and gossiped about his womanizing. He was a relic. While Calhoun, Webster, and Clay had the good fortune to die and be remembered as exemplars of their age, he lingered and became a has been, an object of pity and derision.[9]

In the spring of 1853, Mangum went home to Red Mountain where he would remain until his death eight years later. Neither he nor the state legislature wanted him to serve another term in the senate. By tending to his gardens, reading the papers, and entertaining visitors, he stayed active early in his retirement. He returned to politics in the

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History of American Presidential Elections: 1789-1968, 4 vols. (New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1971), 1:935, 943; Brown, Edward Stanly, p. 161.

[8] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 5:264.

[9] Ibid., 5:174, 182, 200-201, 207, 215, 216, 231, 695, 726, 751; North Carolina Standard (Raleigh), 28 April 1852; David Outlaw to Emily Outlaw, 4 February 1848, 13 February 1848, 2 March 1850, 3 September 1850, David Outlaw Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

mid-1850s, holding honorary posts in county government and presiding over local political meetings. Along with many other former Whigs, he supported the Know-Nothing candidacy of Millard Fillmore in 1856 and even made speeches on his behalf.[10]

After 1856, Mangum's steadily declining health kept him close to home. A series of strokes left him helpless and unable to speak for extended periods of time. Reduced to communicating by pounding his cane on the floor or scrawling words on a slate, Mangum became dependent on his daughter Martha. His nursemaid in these final years, she read him news of politics and of the impending sectional crisis. When South Carolina seceded from the Union he cursed them, but when Northern warships fired on Fort Sumter he followed his state out of the Union. Soon after the war began a local regiment honored him with a parade on the grounds of Walnut Hall. Impressed by the young soldiers, Mangum summoned his son William to his side and scratched out instructions that he join them. The obedient son did and was killed at the Battle of Bull Run a few months later. When he heard the news, the heartbroken Mangum rode with his favorite slave to the family graveyard and pointed to the spot where his son was to be buried. He did not speak that day; he never spoke again. On September 7, 1861, Willie Person Mangum died. The

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[10] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 5:303, 308, 311, 315, 323 746; Hillsborough Recorder, 31 May 1854, 7 March 1855, 23 April, 14 May, 4 June 1856; Martha Person Mangum Diary, 10 May, 7 November 1853, 8 January , 3 October, 12 October 1854, Willie P. Mangum Family Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.; W. Darrell Overdyke, The Know-Nothing Party in the South (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1950), pp. 69, 79-80; Marc W. Kruman, Parties and Politics in North Carolina, 1836-1865 (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1983), pp. 178-79; Daniel Walker Howe, The Political Culture of the American Whigs (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1979), pp. 239, 249; Cole, The Whig Party in the South, p. 325.

press marked his death with laudatory stories about his long and illustrious career. But these eulogies were thinly veiled reminders meant to jostle the memories of readers who had forgotten their local hero and turned their attention elsewhere. The age of Jackson was over, the last pragmatist was dead.[11]

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[11] Shanks, The Papers of Willie P. Mangum, 5:280, 345-46, 355-56, 370, 388, 392, 395, 416-24, 761, 756-57; Hillsborough Recorder, 11 September 1861.

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Born in 1960, Joe Thompson grew up in northern New Jersey with his eight brothers and sisters and his parents Joanne and James. He earned his Bachelor of Arts degree in 1983 from East Stroudsburg University in Pennsylvania and his Master of Arts degree in 1986 from Kent State University in Ohio. He currently resides in Gainesville, Florida with Toni, his wife of twelve years, and teaches at Santa Fe Community College.

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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This dissertation was submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the Department of History in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and to the Graduate School and was accepted as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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